

THE ARMY IN
1906

A POLICY AND A VINDICATION



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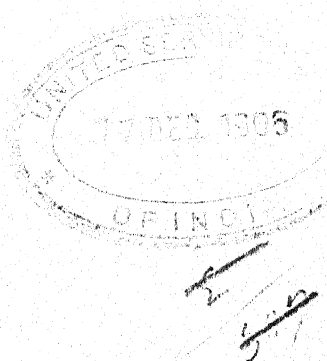
BY THE RIGHT HON.

H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER, M.P.

"Never before this time have we had such good material in the Army. The moral both of officers and men is higher than it was. The Army is in a condition in which I do not think it has been before, both in point of quantity and quality."

THE RIGHT HON. R. B. HALDANE, M.P.

Secretary of State for War, July, 1906

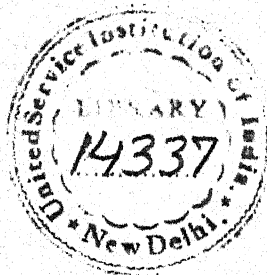


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PREFACE

A FEW words are necessary to explain the object and purpose of the present volume. For nearly thirty years the author has been a close and interested student of military questions at home and abroad, and during that period has taken advantage of such opportunities as are open to one who has neither a professional nor official connection with the Service, to learn by inquiry, by inspection, and by research what was taking place in our own Army and in the Armies of the principal Continental nations. In 1900 the accident of employment on a civil mission in connection with Land Settlement in South Africa gave him the further opportunity of seeing a British army in the field. In the same year he was appointed to the interesting and congenial post of Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty, and enjoyed for three years the great advantage of working under an accomplished and generous chief,¹ and with the members of a Board which has left a deep impress of its work and of its individuality upon the Navy of to-day.

It is impossible to overrate the value of an introduction to official life such as that which is afforded by membership of the Board of Admiralty,

¹ The Earl of Selborne.

and the learner must indeed be dull and unsympathetic who is not impressed by the spirit which animates the deliberations of that body, and by the directness and efficiency of the methods by which it transacts its business.

In the autumn of 1903 the writer was transferred to the onerous post of Secretary of State for War; and from October, 1903, to December, 1905, was responsible for the administration of the Army—first, as Secretary of State alone, under the old system; and from the spring of 1904, as Secretary of State, acting as President of the Army Council.

During these two years the author was enabled to compare the impressions which he had been led to form, and to express as an irresponsible student and writer, with those which were created by close contact with the official side of the administration of the Army.

It may, perhaps, be worth recording that official information and official experience, while they brought much valuable knowledge, confirmed the views which had been the outcome of unofficial study.

It is to the work of these two years of office that the first part of this book is principally devoted. The second part records the impressions which the writer has been led to form with regard to some of the more important of our military problems. The views expressed are the outcome of long and patient consideration, and may fairly be said to be those of a commentator who has had somewhat special opportunities of observation.

Of the first part of the book—that which

deals with the work accomplished, commenced, or attempted at the War Office during the period from October, 1903, to December, 1905—a word of explanation is necessary. During those years it became the duty of the author, as representative of the War Department in the House of Commons, to lay before Parliament a series of proposals for the reorganisation of the Army. It is these proposals, their origin, their nature, and their history, which form the subject of the first portion of this book. It may seem at first sight that in view of the considerable amount of criticism and discussion which the proposals evoked, and in view of the fact that another Administration has succeeded that which was responsible for the plan of 1904, further reference to the controversies and policies of the past is belated and unprofitable.

Such, however, is not the view of the author, and it is because he is strongly of opinion that the opportunity for real and profitable discussion and criticism has only now come, that he has thought it permissible to submit these chapters to the public. It is no exaggeration to say that the discussions which took place with regard to Army matters in 1904-5 were, as a rule, devoid of the character of impartial criticism. Party spirit ran high, prejudice and personal animus distorted argument and warped criticism. The most amazing projects were attributed to the Minister by those who had neither patience nor inclination to acquaint themselves with the proposals he had actually made. Among the many critics the correctness of every individual proposal was admitted; but every such

admission was balanced by an attack upon some other proposal, which was attributed, generally without any justification, to the author of the scheme. The confusion of statement was equalled by the confusion of thought. The same critic, within the short space of a fortnight, belaboured the Secretary of State for daring to suggest that men trained for two years with the colours and subsequently in the Reserve, could be regarded "as worthy of the name of British soldiers"; and asserted with equal vehemence that six months' training under amateur officers was all that the British soldier need ever undergo in order to make him fit to meet a European enemy. The Secretary of State was charged with a desire to "destroy the whole of the Militia," at a time when he was receiving the warm testimony of Militia officers to the value of a proposal by which alone the Militia could be saved from destruction and restored to vigorous life.

Hard words were uttered about a policy which was destined to "ruin recruiting," at a time when recruiting was proceeding with exceptional vigour and success. The folly of discouraging, if not destroying, the Yeomanry was denounced at a time when that very policy was raising the Yeomanry to an unprecedented condition of efficiency and to a hitherto unattained numerical strength. The Volunteers were declared to be dwindling, while their numbers persisted in increasing. The regulations with regard to camp were denounced as oppressive, at a time when the number of men going into camp exceeded all previous records.

The failure to provide guns was brought up in judgment against the War Office at a time when guns were being more rapidly turned out than at any other period in our history. The parsimony of the Department in refusing money for the new artillery was a favourite theme of criticism; and yet the gun-makers could with difficulty earn the ample funds provided. The extravagance of the Department in spending the whole sum required for rearmament in three years was cited as yet another article in the indictment; but the inclusion of the identical sum recommended in 1905 in the Estimates of 1906-7 has met with universal acceptance. In a word, the circumstances of the year 1904-5 were unfavourable to moderate discussion or to impartial criticism. Many things were said in haste which could not be sustained when made the subject of deliberate and impartial examination.

Now, however, a calmer atmosphere prevails. Nothing is to be gained by pursuing a party attack against a Party which is no longer in power, or against a Minister who no longer controls the administration of the Army.

Already the value of this *détente* is becoming apparent. The Army has not been ruined, and the Minister who for two painful years laboured with the sole object of leaving the Army more fit for war than he found it, is rewarded and gratified by the generous tribute of his successor, quoted upon the title-page of this work.

But this is not all. It has been the fashion to pretend that the policy of 1904 and 1905 was a failure, that the proposals made by the Secretary

of State in these years died still-born, and that the work has now to be begun by wiser and more clear-sighted reformers. The propagation of this idea was most valuable from the point of view of controversy. Unfortunately for the controversialists, the facts refuse to lend themselves to this contemptuous treatment. As those who read these pages will discover, the years of work of which they form the record were unusually prolific. The proposals of 1904 have been in very large measure adopted. And it is because they have been adopted that the Army is what it is.

Long-Service enlistment has restored the balance of the Army, and 200,000 men on Long-Service engagements are now with the colours. Short-Service enlistment, concurrently with enlistment for Long Service, has been tried, and has succeeded beyond expectation.¹ The Army Council has been created and its functions defined. The Cavalry has been reorganised and practically remounted. The Artillery has been re-armed. Intimate co-operation between the Navy and Army has been established. The foundation of an organisation for the Volunteers has been created. The Volunteers have accepted the principle that though quantity is not inconsistent with quality, quality must be preferred to numbers; and in recognition of this acceptance the Army Council has taken the first steps to withdraw obsolete guns from the Volunteer batteries. The weeding out of the physically unfit has been sanctioned; and the

¹ This valuable experiment has, most unfortunately, been stopped.

corps affected by the loss of men compensated by new grants which will enable them to replace the inefficient men by effective soldiers.¹ The Yeomanry has reached an unprecedented condition of efficiency, *pari passu* with an increase of numbers.

The Colonial garrisons have been reduced, thus allowing of that concentration of units which is so desirable in the interests of military efficiency, and which in this case has been compatible with an important reduction of expenditure. The deficiency of officers, which was so marked in the Cavalry and the Guards, has been made good.

These and many other things have been done. Want of time and active opposition have prevented, or rather have postponed, the carrying out of the proposals in their entirety; and it is a melancholy reflection that in every case the remedy which those proposals were calculated to supply is still urgently demanded. But that the remedy will be applied, and that, in fact if not in name, it will be identical with that already proposed the author does not doubt, and has never doubted. Already there are valuable indications of the recognition of principles which have been obscured by the dust of party conflict.

It is now admitted that there "is a place in our system for a small body of really good short-service troops, with a proportionately large reserve," and that this force should be raised upon a three-

¹ Both these reforms, sanctioned by the Army Council in 1905, have been vetoed by the present Secretary of State. See pp. 232 and 265.

years, or preferably a two-years term of colour service.¹

The division of the Army into two parts is practically "recognised" as the logical outcome of our Imperial strategy; and the fact that the Militia must form the bulk of the Home Service Army and must be practically a part of the Regular Army, is frankly admitted by the Secretary of State. It is true that the Home Army is, it appears, to be trained for seven months instead of for twelve, but the difference is one of detail, not of principle; and the inexorable logic of the situation will eventually compel an extension to a minimum period of twelve months.

The fact that all Volunteers cannot perform, and do not perform the same duties, has been recognised in the clearest manner by Mr. Haldane, and thus another premise laid down in 1904 has been conceded.

The need for consolidating and improving the Militia has now become a cardinal point of doctrine, instead of its assertion being regarded as an offence against the Militia. Instances might be multiplied, all tending to show that the public mind is becoming reconciled to the proposals of 1904; and that even the harshest critics, relieved from the duty of condemning the shortcomings of an individual, are willing to give a fair and even a favourable consideration to principles which in the interests of controversy it is no longer necessary to confute. For it cannot be too clearly realised that the proposals of 1904 were no brand-new invention, no fantastic

¹ *Spectator*, July 7, 1906.

conception evolved from the brain of an ambitious but ill-informed tyro. Nothing can be further from the fact. The proposals represented an earnest and *bona-fide* attempt to apply to the circumstances of our Army—Regular and Auxiliary—principles on which there was practical unanimity ; and to remedy admitted evils by the adoption of obvious and, indeed, inevitable remedies.

No step was taken until the concurrence of the leaders of military opinion in the Army had been received as to the existence of these evils, and as to the character of the remedy appropriate in each case. That in the endeavour to apply these remedies to the body politic of the Army some interests should be alarmed, some resentments excited, was not only natural, but was inevitable.

But these difficulties can be overcome, and will be overcome as soon as the public opinion of the country is fully alive to the real character of the problem, and to the nature of the difficulties which interfere with its correct solution.

It is the hope of the author that he may have done something to arouse, and at the same time to satisfy public interest with regard to this all-important subject. To those of his readers who bring to the perusal of these pages knowledge, and the consequent power and right to criticise and condemn, he would make one appeal. It is his earnest desire that whatever is here written should be judged upon its merits only ; that the fact that a statement is made, a proposal submitted by one who has been and is a party politician, shall not be allowed to have weight in any judgment that

may be formed with respect to the statement or proposal itself. Two questions and two only are really relevant. In the first place, "Is the statement true, or is the proposal moderate and reasonable?" And in the second place, "Will the proposal, if adopted, make the Army, or that part of the Army to which it applies, more fit for war than it is at present?"

And, if the personal element must needs be imported, the author ventures to hope that the ideas, the facts, and the suggestions which he has brought before the notice of his readers may be regarded, not as the expressions of a politician who for two short years has borne the burden of a great office; but rather those of a diligent student of our military problem, who for many years of his life has devoted such powers as he may possess to seeing things as they are, and who has endeavoured to utilise his knowledge according to his opportunities for the best advantage of the country, and for the welfare of the Army, for which he has always entertained a whole-hearted respect and affection.

H. O. A.-F.

October, 1906.

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PART I

THE NATURE OF THE ARMY PROBLEM.
THE ARMY AS IT IS AND AS IT
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE OBJECT OF THE BOOK.

THE object of this book is to deal with the Army problem in such a way as to make it intelligible to those who are interested in its solution, but who have had no occasion, and perhaps no inclination, to make themselves familiar with technical literature, or to study military questions from a professional point of view.

That there is an Army problem, a problem which is still unsolved, can scarcely be doubted. By general admission the Army we possess is not in all respects the army we require, and although there is no consensus of opinion as to what is essential, there is general agreement as to the need for some change. It is probably a good thing that the number of persons who take an active interest in Army questions has grown considerably of late years. In a country in which the popular voice is the ultimate arbiter, it is desirable that public opinion should be informed, and a desire to obtain information is the condition precedent to its acquisition.

While, however, it is certain that the interest which the public takes in the Army is considerable, and is increasing, it cannot be pretended that, as yet, that interest is in all cases intelligent,

or that the criticisms which are so freely made are always the outcome of any clear conception of what the Army is, or of what an army ought to be.

It is hoped that the method of presenting the problem which has been adopted in these pages may prove to be clear and intelligible. It is the author's intention that no statement should be conveyed in terms which are not familiar to the layman, and that no proposition should be advanced which does not appeal to the ordinary reader who is ignorant of technicalities, but who is anxious to apply the rules of business and common sense to a situation which he understands.

THE ARMY PROBLEM IS NOT INSOLUBLE.

It must be admitted that if the propositions contained in the following chapters are not clear, the fault lies with the author, and not with the subject. It is too often and too readily assumed that the Army problem is not only highly abstruse and technical, but that it is so complex, so difficult, that it is well-nigh impossible to hope for a satisfactory solution. There is no ground for this gloomy opinion. Provided that the question of military efficiency alone be kept in view, the problem of how to form an army out of the materials at the disposal of the nation is by no means a difficult, still less an insoluble one. The really formidable difficulties which have to be encountered have nothing to do with the military aspect of the question; they are principally social and political, and those who interpose them in the path of the military reformer are moved by considerations which have nothing whatever to do with the Army as a fighting machine, or with the question of its success or failure in time of war.

WHAT THE ARMY PROBLEM IS.

What is the nature of the Army problem? It is the problem of how to provide an army of such a size and such a quality that, when the nation finds itself engaged in war, that army will, as far as operations on land are concerned, prove victorious.

For the present, at any rate, it is an absolute condition precedent to any solution that may be arrived at, that the army to be created shall be raised on the basis of voluntary service.

It is to be desired that the solution of the problem should be consistent with a reduction of the burden of our military expenditure; but it is obvious that such a reduction cannot, with reason, be made a condition precedent to the acceptance of any given solution. The thing to be produced is an army capable of defeating the enemy in time of war. Such an army must be composed of a certain number of men, with a given amount of material and equipment, and organised on a certain plan. An army of such a size, so supplied, so equipped and so organised, will cost a given sum of money. It is perfectly legitimate to contend that the same kind of army may be obtained for less money, and the critic who raises and maintains such an objection will be doing a public service. But it is not legitimate, on the contrary it is illogical and absurd, to contend that the army which will win in war is too costly an article, and that we ought, therefore, to cut down its cost, even though in doing so we diminish its numbers and impair its quality.

In the opinion of the author, it is possible, on the basis of voluntary service, to raise and maintain an army capable of supplying the needs of the Empire in time of peace, and of gaining the victory in any conflict in which it is likely to be engaged. In the succeeding chapters an attempt will be made to show how this object can be accomplished;

and to demonstrate at the same time that the nation can not only obtain the army it requires upon the basis of voluntary enlistment, but can obtain it at a less cost than that which is now paid for an army which does not satisfy the necessary conditions with regard to numbers or efficiency.

PART I.

The first part of this book is accordingly devoted to the task of explaining the character and quality of the army required, and the means by which such an army may be raised, maintained and paid for. It is natural that the author, upon whom rested, for a time, the responsibility of dealing officially with the problems involved, should attach importance to the proposals which were made by him while occupying the position of Secretary of State for War, and should give them a prominent place in the series of recommendations which this work contains. Those proposals were the outcome of many years of study, and nothing has taken place which has invalidated the reasoning upon which they were based, or falsified the anticipations by which their public announcement was accompanied. On the contrary, in so far as the proposals made to Parliament in 1904 have been adopted and acted upon, the Army has greatly and obviously benefited. Some of the proposals still remain to be carried into effect, and it is remarkable that every single one of the evils which they were intended and calculated to remedy, still remains, and by universal acknowledgment still demands a cure.

It is for these reasons that a certain number of chapters are devoted to a simple explanation of the proposals made in 1904. The reasons for making those proposals are given at length, and the evils which they were intended to combat, or remove, are examined and explained.

PART II.

The second part of the book is devoted to the consideration of some general problems of very great importance which underlie the whole of our army system. It may be that in the statement of these problems and in the suggestions which are made for their solution, some susceptibilities may be offended, and some deep-seated traditions challenged and even criticised. It has been the object of the author to use no expression which can give offence or can be construed into an attack upon traditions or institutions which, however unsuited to modern military conditions, are nevertheless honourable and splendid.

But it is impossible to go to the root of Army questions without making a resolute attempt to see things as they are, and to value them only in so far as they make for efficiency in war. That sentiment and tradition contribute greatly towards the making of the character and habit which help to secure success in war, is beyond dispute; and any one who fails to recognise the fact is unfit to deal with problems which are as much psychological as they are material. But tradition and sentiment are only of value when they are vivifying, and when they help a great movement. It is therefore not only permissible, but necessary, to examine every tradition, every accepted doctrine, with rigid impartiality, to make it give an account of itself, and to ascertain whether it has risen to the level of an inspiration or sunk to the depth of a superstition.

In the Appendices will be found some facts which cannot with advantage be included in the body of the book, but which should be of value to the reader in supplying him with details which are perforce omitted elsewhere.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER I.

1. There is an "Army Problem" which is still unsolved.
2. The Army problem, regarded as a military problem, is not insoluble.
3. The principal difficulties in the way of Army Reform are social and political, not military.
4. This work is divided into two parts dealing respectively with—

PART I. The actual composition and organisation of the Army, and the methods by which they may be improved.

PART II. General principles underlying the organisation of the Army, and the state of public and military opinion with regard to them.

CHAPTER II

THE ARMY IN 1903-4

THE REASONS FOR ACTION: I. THE REPORT OF THE WAR COMMISSION.

IN the autumn of 1903 it was absolutely incumbent upon the Secretary of State for War to take some steps towards the improvement of the organisation and composition of the Army; and by the Army, in this case, is meant all branches of the land forces of the Crown on the British establishment, or raised within the United Kingdom. As to the existence of this duty, and as to its paramount nature, there can be no doubt whatever. The Secretary of State found himself confronted by a document of which it was impossible to overlook the significance. This was the Report of the Royal Commission upon the War. A perusal of that document made it abundantly evident that while much had been done to improve the Army, and while certain portions of the military machine had worked with success, a great deal remained to be done, and that a grave responsibility would rest upon any Administration which made no endeavour to prevent a recurrence of the evils which had compelled the criticism of the Royal Commission.

2. THE FAILURE OF THE SYSTEM OF THREE YEARS' ENLISTMENT.

Nor was this all. The system under which the Army had been recruited since 1902 may have been suitable for an emergency: may, indeed, have

been the only one possible under the stress of war ; but in 1903 there were already ominous signs of its approaching breakdown. In 1902 it had been decided that the whole of the Regular Army should be enlisted for a term of three years only. It was known, at the time, that the Indian and Colonial drafts could not be furnished by men enlisted for this short period. It was hoped, however, that in the Infantry of the Line, at least, the rate of extension (to seven years), among the men originally enlisted for three years only, would reach 75 per cent. of the total. Had this expectation been verified in practice, no difficulty would have been found in furnishing the Infantry drafts.¹

As long as it was possible to hope that the expectations which had been formed would be fulfilled, there was no serious reason for alarm. But in the autumn of 1903 it had already become evident that these expectations would not be fulfilled. So far from maintaining the proportion of 75 per cent., the average rate of extension throughout the Infantry was under 20 per cent., and in some battalions it was under 10 per cent. And here it must be noted that owing to the peculiar constitution of our Army, in which drafting from one corps to another is illegal, it was necessary to deal with each unit as a separate organisation, and the excess of extensions in one corps could not be utilised to correct the shortage of extensions in another.

It will easily be seen how serious was the prospect thus presented. It had been anticipated that out of every hundred men enlisted, nearly seventy-five would become available for dispatch to India or the Colonies, or, as old soldiers, to stiffen the

¹ In the case of the Garrison Artillery, the 75-per-cent. rate of extension would have been insufficient, inasmuch as more than half of the men of the Garrison Artillery serve abroad in time of peace. It has been calculated that in the case of this corps a rate of extension of 100 per cent. would have been necessary.

THREE YEARS' ENLISTMENTS 9

battalions at home. But when it became apparent that out of a hundred men only ten, fifteen or twenty, as the case might be, were likely to become available, it was impossible to ignore the danger of the situation. It was evident that either the supply of men available for the foreign drafts would altogether cease, or that establishments must be raised and recruiting must be increased to a figure beyond all precedent, and far beyond the limits of what was possible. It will be seen, therefore, that the state of affairs produced by the adoption of Short-Service enlistment for the entire Army furnished another overwhelming reason for immediate action. It is no exaggeration to say that had the three-years' system been allowed to continue, the Infantry of the Line and the Garrison Artillery would practically have disappeared.

3. THE ESHER COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

The two motives for action referred to above, namely, the publication of the Report of the War Commission, and the failure of the system of three years' enlistment, became effective in the autumn of 1903. In the spring of the following year a third motive was added. On the 11th January, 1904, the Report of the War Office Reconstitution Committee (commonly known as the Esher Committee) was received, and the duty of carrying its recommendations into effect was forthwith imposed upon the Secretary of State. Every one of the recommendations of the Committee was a recognition of the need for changes, and prescribed the measures which, in the opinion of the Committee, should be taken to effect such changes.

4. THE REPORT OF THE NORFOLK COMMISSION.

Later in the same year a still further motive for action, and for drastic action, was furnished by the

Report of the Duke of Norfolk's Commission on the Militia and Volunteers. It is impossible to exaggerate the gravity of some of the statements which are embodied in this Report. It must be remembered that the country was at the moment spending some four millions sterling a year upon the Militia and Volunteers. The strength of the two forces in 1904 was no less than 357,112 officers and men, the equivalent of ten army corps. After a careful inquiry the Norfolk Commission reported on these two great branches of our military service in a manner calculated to alarm the most complacent believer in our military system.

5. THE COMMITTEE OF IMPERIAL DEFENCE.

The Report of the War Commission stood as a warning and a guide. The system of enlistment was already breaking down; the administration of the War Office had been condemned after careful examination by a competent authority; and the Norfolk Report had declared both branches of the Auxiliary Forces to be unfit for war.

But this was not all. It had long been apparent to many students of our military problem that a system which was based upon the hypothesis of liability to an invasion in force of these islands, and which practically ignored the supremacy of the British Navy, had ceased to be suitable to the needs of the British Empire. The views which had long been entertained by a few were now about to become the recognised creed of the many. The so-called "Blue-Water School" had fought hard for recognition; that recognition was now afforded in the most authoritative manner. In 1904 the Committee of Imperial Defence was reconstituted on a fresh basis by the Prime Minister.

From that date the Committee sat practically

every week, and as its deliberations proceeded formed, and eventually formulated, certain definite conclusions with regard to the military defence of the Empire, which necessarily had a very important bearing upon the constitution and distribution of the Army in all its branches.

From time to time the views of the Committee found expression in speeches made in Parliament by the Prime Minister, or by other Ministers speaking with his authority. The general conclusion may be summed up as follows:

As long as the Navy retains its present predominant position among the navies of the world, the principal military dangers to which the nation is likely to be exposed must be over-sea, and our preparations must be made with a due recognition of that fact. The question of invasion of these Islands on a large scale need not be contemplated, but adequate precautions must be taken to guard against "a raid" or a landing in force, undertaken for the purpose of inflicting injury, but not of conquering and occupying the country.

It is obvious that from these conclusions many important consequences flowed. Perhaps the most important deductions to be drawn from them are these:

1. The constitution of the Regular Army must be such as to allow of the maintenance of an adequate force for performing garrison and police duties abroad in time of peace, and also to allow of a great expansion of this force by the addition of a very large number of adequately trained officers and men in time of war.

2. Whatever force is to be retained for the purpose of home defence will, if engaged with an enemy at all, be opposed to a very highly trained and specially organised force, and must therefore be of a high quality in order to ensure victory over such an opponent.

Other deductions might legitimately have been drawn from the premises laid down, and the conclusions arrived at by the Imperial Defence Committee. But whatever might be their nature, they all tended to augment the weight of authority in favour of a change in the composition and organisation of our land forces.

6. THE NEED FOR ECONOMY.

Lastly, there was one other motive which was as operative with the Secretary of State in 1903-4 as it is likely to be with any of his successors, namely, the motive of economy. Whether an outlay of £31,000,000 or £32,000,000 a year upon that portion of the land forces of the Crown which is quartered within the United Kingdom and the Colonies is in itself altogether excessive, may be a matter of opinion. But in arriving at that opinion it is well to bear in mind the fact that money spent upon an army which will not win in war, is money absolutely wasted. No economy is effected by endeavouring to span a hundred-foot gap with a ninety-foot bridge. An army that will win is worth paying for; an army which will not win is worth nothing at all—a fact which is too often forgotten by so-called economists. But that the total of Army Estimates is enormous, and ought if possible to be reduced, is a matter of common agreement, and this necessity was frequently recognised in the frankest terms by the Secretary of State for War in the House of Commons.

It is, however, exceedingly easy to indulge in economy as a "pious opinion"; but "who wishes the end, wishes the means." If money is to be saved, that on which money is expended must be dispensed with. In the Navy, a ready means of reduction is found by arresting the shipbuilding or repairing programme. Not to lay down a first-class battle-

ship is to save a million and a quarter. Not to repair or keep in commission some fifty comparatively modern ships, may save another million. To discharge large numbers of men from the Dockyards may mean further reductions. But in the case of the Army, a reduction under the head of "Material" would furnish no sensible relief. What costs money is the man, and all the accessories of his upkeep. To save money we must get rid of men. It may be right or wrong to economise in this manner, but it is not open to those who recommend economy to complain of the misdirected zeal which insists upon change, and is never content to "let well alone."

Reduction of expenditure means change, and this is a truth which has perhaps been too little appreciated.

It will be seen, therefore, that the motives which, in the beginning of 1904, led the Secretary of State to propose serious and, in some cases, far-reaching changes in the constitution and organisation of the Army, were individually cogent and collectively overwhelming. He had before him—

1. The Report of the South African War Commission.

2. The failure of the system of three years' enlistment.

3. The Report of the Esher Committee.

4. The Report of the Norfolk Commission.

5. The opinion of the Committee of Imperial Defence.

6. The growing and widespread demand for retrenchment.

It would have been absolutely impossible for any occupant of the office to disregard such a consensus of opinion, such clear guidance from facts which were forced upon his notice.

It will hardly be denied, therefore, that change was necessary and that action was necessary, and

this brings us to the all-important question of what was the nature of the change demanded, and what was the action, which the circumstances referred to above, logically entailed. In the following chapter an attempt will be made to formulate very briefly the general conclusions which the Secretary of State for War was led to form, and the reasons which guided him in arriving at those conclusions.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER II.

In 1903-4, change in the constitution and organisation of the Army was inevitable.

CHAPTER III

THE NATURE OF THE ARMY REQUIRED

THE CONDITION PRECEDENT TO ACTION.

IN the preceding chapter an attempt was made to demonstrate the absolute urgency of the need for action which confronted the Secretary of State for War at the close of the year 1903. To stand still was impossible; to advance, however difficult, was an imperative duty. It was obvious, moreover, that before any change could be made with advantage, one paramount problem had to be considered and, if possible, to be resolved.

It was useless to make any change in the organisation or composition of the British Army, unless and until the purposes for which that Army was to be maintained and utilised were clearly understood.

It has been suggested by some critics that this all-important question was overlooked, and that it must now be considered for the first time. This view is erroneous. There may be differences of opinion as to what is, or ought to be the correct solution of the problem; but that it was fully considered in 1903-4, and that the proposals subsequently made were based upon a clear and definite idea of what the duties of the British Army in peace and war really are, is indisputable.

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WHAT THE ARMY HAS TO DO.

The following are the general conclusions which were arrived at by the Secretary of State after a careful study of the evidence before him:—

The British Army is called upon to perform tasks which are imposed upon the army of no other nation. It is therefore essential that the British Army should have a special organisation adapted to the requirements of the British Empire, and should not be hampered by an attempt to imitate the organisations of other nations which are not confronted by the same problems.

The task of the British Army is threefold :

(a) To supply troops on a war footing, in peace time, to garrison India, South Africa, the Mediterranean, and other stations outside the United Kingdom.

(b) To provide a small force in aid of the Civil Power in the United Kingdom, in time of peace.

(c) To furnish a very large army for service in time of war.

It is to be observed that while the two last-named duties are imposed upon all armies, the first—namely, that of maintaining a large force on a war footing in peace time, and of maintaining that force for the most part in tropical or sub-tropical countries—is imposed upon this country alone among the nations of the world.¹

To the general principles which have been enunciated above, and which are, indeed, little more than mere statements of indisputable facts, there must be added, for the proper comprehension of the

¹ The 19th Corps of the French Army occupies Algeria as a part of the garrison of France, Algeria being an integral part of the Republic. It is true, however, that a certain number of special troops are maintained both in Algeria and Tunis, and to this extent the problem confronting France is analogous to that which confronts this country.

THE TWO NECESSARY ARMIES 17

argument which is to follow, a further proposition which is generally, though perhaps not as yet universally accepted, namely—

That whereas the military preparations of other countries are primarily, and of necessity designed for the defence of the national soil; the armies of our country are to a great extent relieved from this duty by its insular position, and by the supremacy of the Fleet; but, on the other hand, they may be called upon to carry out operations on a large scale across the sea and at a great distance from their base.

THE ARMY FOR PEACE AND THE ARMY FOR WAR.

If these propositions be accepted, it is obvious that certain conclusions inevitably follow from them. It is evident that—

(a) The army which is to supply the national needs must be of a kind which will furnish the peace garrison of the Empire.

(b) That the army which supplies the peace garrison must be supplemented by another and much larger army in time of war.

This is not the place to discuss the particular steps which must be taken to meet these double requirements; but one or two deductions are obvious, and may be mentioned at once.

THE NEED FOR A LONG-SERVICE ARMY.

The army which serves as a peace garrison in tropical or sub-tropical countries must be a *Long-Service Army*.

It must be a Long-Service Army because, in the first place, it must be a "grown-up" army. The rule that soldiers shall not be sent to India until they are twenty years of age, is based upon the hard teaching of experience. But in a voluntary

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army such as ours many recruits must be taken at an earlier age. The peace garrison, therefore, must either consist of men who, having been enlisted while young, have remained for some years with the colours in order to qualify for foreign service ; or it must be composed of men who have not enlisted until they have reached a comparatively mature age. To employ either class of men for a year or two only would be to ruin the men so employed, and would be a most costly experiment—an experiment which no one has ever recommended.

It is evident, therefore, that the foreign peace garrison of the Empire must be composed of long-service men.

THE NEED FOR A SHORT-SERVICE ARMY.

It is equally evident that the army which, in time of war, is to supplement the foreign peace garrison must be a *Short-Service Army*.

By the adoption of short service alone can large numbers of trained men be obtained.

A battalion which turns over its men every two years will have produced, in ten years' time, something like 4,000 trained men. On the other hand, the product of a battalion enlisted for nine years will be exceedingly small. The maximum output to the Reserve in any year cannot exceed one-ninth of the total of the men serving ; and from this number must be deducted the heavy wastage of men both in the ranks and in the Reserve.

SHORT SERVICE A CONDITION OF RETRENCHMENT.

By the adoption of short service alone can any reduction of expenditure be ensured.

It is impossible for this country to maintain a force of 500,000 regular soldiers with the colours

SHORT SERVICE AND RESERVES 19

in time of peace without incurring a cost which the taxpayer would inevitably and rightly refuse to bear. But 500,000 men, and more, may easily be required in time of war, and the men provided must be trained, officered, and organised if they are to render effective service in the field. It is only by the adoption of short service in some form that this force, so trained, so officered, and so organised, can be furnished without undue expenditure.

A private of the line with the colours costs £44 10s. a year. A private in the First-Class Army Reserve costs £18 2s. 6d. A long-service soldier in receipt of service pay costs £69 10s. A short-service soldier with the colours costs £49 10s., while the average annual cost of a short-service soldier serving two years with the colours and ten years with the Reserve is £22 only.¹

A LARGE RESERVE INVOLVES SHORT SERVICE.

Again, short service is compatible with the utilisation in large numbers of young men between eighteen and twenty years of age. Long service is not. There is no reason—save that of expense—why the whole of the young men in this country between the ages of eighteen and twenty, who are willing to serve their country in emergency, should not receive a thorough military training, provided they are not required to serve abroad during the years in question. If such men pass into the Reserve at the age of twenty they will be of mature age and capable of undertaking foreign service whenever they are recalled to the colours.

It is evident, therefore, that if the foreign-service peace garrison of the Empire is to be largely rein-

¹ The cost of a Militiaman serving six months on enlistment, and with six weeks' training, is slightly less, viz. £16 per annum.

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forced by trained soldiers in time of war, these trained soldiers can only be provided under a system of short-service enlistment.

THE BRITISH ARMY MUST BE AVAILABLE OVER-SEA.

If it be conceded that the main propositions advanced in this chapter are sound, and that the British Army is intended to serve the double purpose of garrisoning India and certain Colonial stations in time of peace, and of conducting a successful campaign in time of war, certain corollaries may fairly be deduced from those propositions.

Wherever the war is fought the Army must be ready to go. Where that war will take place it is impossible to forecast with any degree of certainty. It is conceivable that it will take place within the United Kingdom, but such a contingency is highly improbable. In the opinion of the Committee of Imperial Defence, and of the great majority of those who have made a study of our military problems, it is probable that the scene of any land war in which this country is likely to be engaged will be abroad: it may be on the Indian Frontier; it may be nearer home; but it will be an over-sea war.

If this be so, it is obvious that the army which is to decide the issue must be a foreign-service army; and that, in so far as those who compose the British Army are, by the terms of their engagement, precluded or excused from fighting outside the limits of the United Kingdom, that army will be useless for the purpose for which it is primarily designed and principally required.

If, then, it be admitted that we require a Long-Service Army for peace time, and a Short-Service Army for purposes of expansion in time of

CAN THE PROBLEM BE SOLVED? 21

war, and that both these armies must be available in case of need for war over-sea, we have before us a definite and accurate problem, to the solution of which we can address ourselves with advantage. Given the need, how can it be met? How can such an Army be raised, maintained, and paid for? In the following chapter an attempt will be made to give a categorical answer to these questions.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER III.

1. The character of an army should depend on the work it has to do.
2. The British Army has to provide a limited peace garrison and a large force for war.
3. The British Army will probably fight abroad: its constitution must, therefore, allow of its going abroad in time of war.
4. The peace garrison of the Empire must be enlisted for Long Service.
5. The Army which reinforces the peace garrison in time of war must be enlisted for Short Service.
6. Short Service is necessary to provide *numbers*, and to diminish cost.

CHAPTER IV

THE TRANSLATION OF PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE

THE MAIN OUTLINES OF THE PROPOSALS OF 1904.

It was on the assumption that the reasoning contained in the previous chapter was sound, and that the description there given of the military problems of the Empire was correct, that the Secretary of State for War, in the year 1904, laid certain proposals before Parliament. Those proposals have been long before the public, and, at first sight, it might seem superfluous to re-state a policy which has been widely discussed and freely and frequently criticised. It is, however, a peculiar feature of the situation that though there has been ample time to criticise, there has evidently been little time to study or to weigh. Criticism upon Army questions is, as a rule, purely destructive, and rarely professes to take into account the problem of Army organisation as a whole. Indeed, so general and so complete have been the misunderstandings and misrepresentations which have done duty for criticism, that the public has had scarcely any opportunity of realising what was the true nature of the policy it was asked to condemn.

It is therefore desirable to set forth, as briefly as may be, the actual proposals which were made. In subsequent chapters these proposals, the grounds

upon which they were based, and the objects they were designed to attain, will be discussed at greater length.

The main proposals may be summarised as follows:

1. The division of the Regular Army into two portions, the one enlisted principally for Long Service, and charged with the duty of furnishing the garrison of the Empire at home and abroad in time of peace; the other enlisted principally for Short Service and charged with the duty of creating a large reserve capable of reinforcing the Long-Service Army in time of war.

2. The creation and maintenance in the United Kingdom of a Striking Force of moderate dimensions. This force to be so organised and composed as to be capable of being used at a moment's notice and without the necessity of calling up the reserve.

3. The institution of large depots for the training of recruits in substitution for the existing small regimental depots.

4. The abolition of the linked-battalion system for the purpose of supplying drafts.

5. The grouping of battalions and the interchangeability, within certain limits, of officers and men.

6. The creation of a large number of additional officers of the Regular Army.

7. A change in the organisation of the Cavalry, whereby the necessity of drafting men from one regiment to another might be avoided.

8. The formation of a true Territorial Army composed of Short-Service battalions; such battalions to be quartered, as far as possible, within the districts with which they are associated.

9. The utilisation of the Militia as the basis of the Territorial Army; the Militia being made liable for foreign service in time of war.

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10. A thorough reform of the Militia system with the object of making the Militia units independent, of making them efficient for war, and of supplying them with an adequate number of well-trained officers.

11. The provision of certain employment for soldiers of good character on the completion of their term of service in the Long-Service Army.

12. A change in the allotment of the money available for the Volunteer Force, so as to allow of a larger sum being spent upon capable and efficient men and upon the organisation of the force as a whole, concurrently with a smaller expenditure upon that portion of the force which, according to the report of the Duke of Norfolk's Commission, was unfit for war.

13. The provision of a brigade and divisional organisation for the Volunteers.

Such were the outlines of the proposals laid before Parliament in 1904. In many respects they were supplemented by minor proposals which need not be set out at length at this stage.

CHAPTER V

THE PROPOSALS OF 1904

THE MODERATE CHARACTER OF THE PROPOSALS.

THE succeeding chapters will, to a large extent, be devoted to the task of stating and explaining the proposals for the reorganisation of the Army which were laid before Parliament in 1904. It must be clearly understood, however, that such a statement is not intended to be a mere re-affirmation of personal opinions, which, having been laid before the public and subjected to criticism, have been rejected as impracticable, or inapplicable to the facts of the situation. Such, indeed, is far from being the case. The proposals of 1904 involved the acceptance of no new principles ; no revolutionary changes in the Army. The most that was claimed for them was that they gave a definite and coherent form to ideas upon which the great majority of authorities were in agreement. They represented the common-sense application of those ideas to the organisation of the Army as it then stood.

WHAT HAS BEEN AND WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE.

Many of the proposals of 1904 have been carried into effect, and it is no exaggeration to say that in every single instance the result has been satisfactory. What was sought has been obtained;

what was promised has been performed. There are, however, several parts of the scheme which, owing to Parliamentary opposition, to want of time, to imperfect comprehension on the part of the public, or some other cause have not hitherto become operative. Such are the proposals with regard to the Militia, the enlistment of men for Short Service, the improvement of the Volunteers, etc.¹

In all these cases the evil which was recognised, and which the new plan was intended to remove, remains, and has still to be dealt with.

THE SCHEME AS A WHOLE.

But although what has been accomplished is satisfactory, it must be clearly understood that the proposals of 1904 formed a definite and complete scheme of which every part was dependent on every other; and for every part of which there was a definite and intelligible reason.

It must not be supposed, therefore, that any partial accomplishment can be regarded as sufficient. The materials for a house may be excellent, but until they have been combined and erected they will afford neither shelter nor comfort. A picture half painted is not worth half the finished work.

It is, therefore, desirable that the proposals of 1904 should be stated briefly in a consecutive form, so that the reader may have an opportunity, not only of understanding what they actually were and are, but of observing the mutual interdependence of the various parts, and their relations to the scheme as a whole.

Such an opportunity is afforded by the inclusion in the Appendix (App. II.) of the document presented to Parliament in July, 1904.

¹ This step was actually taken in 1905, and with great success; but the action was reversed in the spring of 1906 by the Army Council, and the old and unsatisfactory state of things restored.

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This paper is a summary of the speech made by the author, speaking as Secretary of State for War, on behalf of the Government of the day. In Part II. of the summary will be found a succinct account of the changes actually proposed. In some particulars these proposals were modified at a later date; in others they have been added to. For instance, the division of the Volunteers into two classes was abandoned in deference to public opinion; though, as is explained elsewhere (p. 226), such a division actually exists, and is likely to become still more marked in the future.

The readiness of the Treasury to grant additional funds made it possible to dispense with the reduction of the numbers of the Volunteer Force, as a condition precedent to an increase of its efficiency.

The proposed strength of the Short-Service battalions was raised, in deference to military advice, from 500 to 525. The reasons for these and other modifications will be found in the succeeding chapters, but generally speaking the statement of 1904 stands as the basis of the scheme which was recommended to Parliament in that year, and which is explained in greater detail in these pages.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER V.

1. The proposals laid before Parliament in 1904 involve no great departure from accepted principles, but are the application of such principles to the Army of to-day.

2. Many of the proposals made in 1904 have been carried into effect, and with advantage to the Army.

3. Some of the proposals of 1904 have not yet been acted upon, and the evils which they were intended to deal with are still unremedied.

4. The proposals of 1904 form a complete and coherent scheme, and should be so regarded.

5. The general principles of the scheme of 1904 are contained in Appendix II.

CHAPTER VI

LONG AND SHORT SERVICE

THE FAILURE OF LONG SERVICE IN 1855.

It will be observed that the division of the Regular Army into two portions, the one enlisted principally for Long Service, the other enlisted principally for Short Service, was placed in the forefront of the proposals made to Parliament in 1904. The terms "Long" and "Short" Service require definition. Whether service be considered as long or short must necessarily depend upon the acceptance of some normal standard. Within the last fifty years there have been many changes in the terms on which soldiers have been enlisted for the Regular Army, and the terms "Long" and "Short" have received a totally different interpretation at different times. Up to the date of Lord Cardwell's great reform, the usual period of enlistment was for twenty-one years and a pension. The system had some advantages, but overwhelming disadvantages. It undoubtedly gave us one good army composed of seasoned men, who rarely, if ever, failed us in the field. But it gave us no reserve whatever for that army, and furnished no means by which the waste of war could be met. The utter breakdown of our military system at the close of the Crimean War supplied an overwhelming proof of the defects of the adoption of the system of Long Service alone. The veterans who fell at Alma and Inkerman, or who were swept away by famine, pestilence, and the bullet during the long siege, could not be

LORD CARDWELL'S SHORT SERVICE 29

replaced by fighting men of the same quality—a fact made sadly apparent on the occasion of the attack on the Redan. Nor were trained soldiers alone deficient. In 1855 the country was actually unable to furnish sufficient soldiers, good or bad, to supply the military needs of the nation, and a contingent was assembled at Chobham composed of foreigners hired by the British taxpayer to fight his battles for him.

THE PERIOD OF SERVICE UNDER THE CARDWELL SYSTEM.

In 1870 Lord Cardwell introduced what was then known as the "Short-Service System," namely, six years with the colours and six years with the Reserve. In name, at any rate, this system held the field for nearly thirty years. The actual terms of service were, however, subject to constant variation. At one time men were encouraged to pass to the Reserve after four or five years' colour service, the object of this policy being to increase the number of reservists. But the general tendency was in the contrary direction. The six years' colour service was extended to seven, and by a free use of the power of retaining men in India, which the War Office always claimed, the period of colour service for the majority of men was in practice extended to eight years, thus curtailing the service in the Reserve to four years. During the whole of this period enlistment for twelve and twenty-one years was known as "Long Service," while the Cardwell term was described as "Short Service."

THREE YEARS' ENLISTMENT.

In 1898 a further change was made. With the object of passing a large number of men through the ranks, and thereby strengthening the Reserve,

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a limited number of recruits, not exceeding 100 per battalion, were enlisted for the infantry for a term of three years' colour service, followed by nine years' service in the Reserve. This plan had been under trial for a short time only when the whole Army was mobilised for the South African War.

In 1902 the paramount necessity of creating a large reserve having been made apparent as a result of the war, the Cardwellian period of enlistment was abandoned, and all recruits for the Army were enlisted for a period of three years with the colours and nine years with the Reserve.

NINE YEARS' ENLISTMENT.

In 1904, for reasons which have been partly explained, it became necessary to make a further change. The three-years' system was abandoned for the Infantry of the Line, for the Garrison Artillery, and for the Cavalry. For the Infantry of the Line nine years' colour service followed by three years with the Reserve, was substituted for the three years with the colours and nine years with the Reserve. The same plan was adopted for the Garrison Artillery, while the Cavalry were once more enlisted for seven years with the colours and five years with the Reserve. In October, 1905, enlistment for two years with the colours and ten years in the Reserve was opened in seven battalions of the Infantry of the Line.¹

It will be seen from the above brief historical summary that Long Service and Short Service have had very different meanings at different times. For the purposes of the present work, however, Long Service must be taken to mean any period of colour service from six years upwards, while by Short Service is meant enlistment with the colours for three years or any shorter period.

¹ This system of Short-Service enlistment was discontinued in the spring of 1906.

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WHY BOTH LONG AND SHORT SERVICE ARE NECESSARY.

We may now return to the proposition laid down at the commencement of this chapter, namely, that the Regular Army must be divided into two portions, the one enlisted principally for Long Service, the other enlisted principally for Short Service.

As a matter of fact, while there is still much difference of opinion as to the exact period of colour service which can be adopted with the greatest advantage to the Army, there is now a large measure of agreement among all parties with regard to the main proposition, namely, that whatever be the ultimate constitution of our land forces, there must, in some shape or other, be a Long-Service Army and a Short-Service Army.¹ These armies may be described in various ways, but that, under some appellation or other, they must be created is generally admitted.

It must be conceded, however, that though the consensus of opinion is general, it can hardly be described as universal. There are undoubtedly some soldiers, and perhaps a few civilians, who really believe that it is possible to go back to the old plan of enlisting the whole of the Regular Army upon a long-service basis, or at any rate on the basis of seven or eight years' colour service.²

LONG SERVICE ALONE IS IMPOSSIBLE.

It is necessary, therefore, to say a word on this point. That word may be very brief. It is not

¹ The Right Hon. R. B. Haldane, Secretary of State for War, speaking in the House of Commons on 2nd May, 1906, said: "Let me point out that I think there is great force in the contention of the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Arnold-Forster), that you cannot have a Long-Service Army without a Short-Service Army too."

² The Secretary of State for War has recently (July 1906) pledged himself to continue the Linked-Battalion system. But the attempt is destined to fail.

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possible to go back to long-service enlistment for the whole of the Regular Army, and for two all-sufficient reasons. In the first place, the maintenance of 150 battalions of Infantry of the Line on a twelve-years' or a seven-years' basis is incompatible with a reduction of the Estimates, and for the present, at any rate, the demand for reduction is general and will in all probability prevail.

In the second place, the maintenance of the Army on this basis is impossible, because it is incompatible with the creation of an adequate Reserve. The following plain figures will serve to make the proposition clear. The calculation is made upon the assumption that the Infantry of the Line has been reduced by seven battalions,¹ leaving a total of 149 battalions of infantry to be dealt with, distributed as follows:

| | | | |
|-------------|------|-----------------------------|-------|
| In India | . 52 | battalions at a strength of | 1,000 |
| In Colonies | . 35 | " " " | 800 |
| At Home | . 62 | " " " | 750 |
| | | | <hr/> |
| | | | 149 |
| | | | <hr/> |

It is assumed that these battalions are raised upon a seven and five-years' basis. The experience of mobilisation in 1900 shows that a battalion with a peace establishment of 750 will on an average contain 321 men unavailable for service, viz.:

| | | |
|---|-----------|-------|
| Under one year's service | | 243 |
| Over one year's service, but under twenty | | |
| years of age | | 57 |
| Medically unfit | | 21 |
| | | <hr/> |
| | | 321 |
| | | <hr/> |

¹ These figures are the result of an actuarial calculation made for the purpose of ascertaining the result of a reduction of seven battalions. It is for this reason that the number of Line Battalions has been taken at 149 instead of 156. The result, as appears, was wholly unsatisfactory, and all idea of effecting such a reduction was abandoned. The Secretary of State for War, however, has recently (July, 1906) decided to destroy eight Line Battalions. The result will necessarily be somewhat worse than that shown in the text.

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If it be further assumed that a minimum of 15 battalions be retained at home, 47 will be available for dispatch to the seat of war. Each such battalion will not only require 321 men in the Reserve to supply the places of those disqualified, but will also have to be made up to the full war establishment of 1,000 men. There will, however, be the 15 battalions of the line remaining at home. Each of these will require 321 men to replace their non-effectives. These men must be taken from the Reserve. The Indian drafts must also be furnished from the same source, as it is obvious that battalions which are in process of being mobilised for war cannot, at the same time, furnish drafts to battalions abroad.

The result of carrying out these various processes will involve the following demand upon the Reserve :—

| | Reservists. |
|--|---------------|
| For Indian drafts and to complete establishment of 47 battalions proceeding to seat of war | 32,404 |
| To replace non-effectives in 47 battalions | 15,087 |
| To mobilise 15 Home battalions | 5,565 |
| | <u>53,056</u> |

It is now necessary to ask what reserve the 149 battalions above referred to will have produced? A actuarial calculation shows that the total number will be 54,627, but of these a considerable portion will be ineffective from various causes. A moderate estimate places the number at 10 per cent., after deducting which, the total available reserve will number no more than 49,165 men, showing an actual deficiency of 3,891 men on the total required for the initial mobilisation and the provision of the essential Indian drafts.¹

¹ It may be suggested that Indian drafts will not be required, as men serving in India will be retained in that country, although their original term of colour service has expired. It is obvious, however, that such

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It is evident from this calculation that a Long-Service Army cannot supply us with the reservists necessary to mobilise that army. Still less can it supply the personnel required during the initial stages of a campaign.

WHY SHORT SERVICE ALONE IS IMPOSSIBLE.

If, therefore, it be admitted that a return to long-service enlistment pure and simple is impossible, some other system must perforce be adopted. We need not pause to discuss at length the proposal which has actually been made in some quarters to the effect that universal Short Service should be adopted. At the present moment no less than 129,473 men are serving abroad in peace time. By a salutary rule, the outcome of long experience, we forbid men of under twenty years of age to serve in India either in peace or war.¹

As long, therefore, as we continue to enlist boys at the age of eighteen, or, as in the Militia, at sixteen or seventeen, we must add to any effective term of service the two or three years which must elapse before the recruit is physically fit for foreign service.

It is, of course, possible to send young men out to India at the age of twenty, and to bring them back in two years; though it must be observed that even this entails a colour service of four years. But, apart from the great expense of this process, it would undoubtedly be condemned by every soldier as absolutely incompatible with fighting efficiency.

men are in fact reservists, and that in so far as they are regarded as forming part of the strength of the battalions abroad, they must be deducted from the strength of the Reserve, to which in the ordinary course they would have been transferred.

¹ Exceptions have been made in respect of what are known as "Short-Tour Battalions" serving in the Mediterranean and in other Colonial stations; but this exception has been the outcome of necessity, not of conviction. The exigencies of the Service have compelled the War Office to pretend that certain foreign stations are really at home, and troops have been sent to those stations under that pretence. But only the public has been deceived, and the practice is a most dangerous one.

The first two years of the soldier's life in India are the years of greatest mortality and invaliding. Moreover, those who know the history of our great Indian campaigns, of the almost incredible feats which have been performed by British troops in the Sikh wars and in the dark days of the Mutiny, will realise that such deeds can never be repeated by battalions composed almost entirely of young men between the ages of twenty and twenty-two, new to India and unaccustomed to the hardships of war. Let those who wish to understand what was the quality of the battalions which saved India read that admirable book *The Story of a Soldier's Life*, by Colonel Ewart (afterwards General Sir John Alexander Ewart, G.C.B.), who led the 93rd Sutherland Highlanders at the Relief of Lucknow.

The plan of Short-Service enlistment for the whole Army, at home and abroad, may therefore be discarded as impracticable, and if practicable, unprofitable.

CONCURRENT ENLISTMENT IS ESSENTIAL.

Having thus eliminated—

1. Long-Service enlistment for the whole Army,
2. Short-Service enlistment for the whole Army,

we arrive by a logical process at the third possible method, namely, a mixed system of concurrent Long-Service and Short-Service enlistment. It is in the adoption of this principle that a solution must be found.

If this be granted, it is obvious that further important questions present themselves for solution, viz:

(a) What proportion of the Army should be enlisted for Long Service, and what proportion for Short Service?

(b) What should be the length of the terms of service respectively?

(c) From what sources should the Long-Service and Short-Service recruits, respectively, be taken?

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(a) What ought to be the relation of the two branches of the Army to each other, and to the other branches of the land forces of the Crown?

To the question of what proportion of the Army should be enlisted for Long Service, and what proportion for Short Service, it is not really difficult to give an answer. The number of troops to be raised upon a long-service basis depends upon certain easily ascertainable conditions. It has been shown that Long Service is necessary for that portion of the Army which has to furnish the peace garrison of the Empire. What are the numbers of that garrison? The official return states that, in January, 1906, the number of men serving in India and the Colonies was, in round numbers—

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------|
| India | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 78,000 |
| Colonies | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 52,000 |
| | | | | | | | | <hr/> 130,000 <hr/> |

A moment's reflection, however, will be sufficient to show that the total number of Long-Service men required must be in excess of this figure. Troops cannot be raised exclusively for foreign service; such a system would not only be very unpopular with the Army, but would have great political disadvantages. The re-creation of a purely Indian Army was at one time advocated by some officers of distinction; but the idea finds scarcely any supporters at the present time, and it is obvious that the existence of an army entirely out of touch with the sentiments and aspirations of the public at home would be inconvenient, if not dangerous.

We must, therefore, add to the number of men actually serving abroad—

(a) A sufficient number to allow of a circulation being effected between India, the Colonies, and home.

THE LINKED-BATTALION SYSTEM 37

(b) A sufficient number to furnish the depots and to supply the drafts for the Long-Service Army.

Here we may pause for a moment to observe that whatever may be the ultimate constitution of the Army, the linked-battalion system, which for so many years prevailed, must necessarily cease. It is obvious that whatever conclusion we come to as to the exact number of regiments, batteries, and battalions which ought to be retained abroad and at home respectively, the number abroad will largely exceed the number at home. If this be so, a system which depends upon an equality between the number of battalions serving at home and abroad must obviously break down. As a matter of fact, it has broken down long ago in everything but the theory; and failure to recognise the fact has resulted in immense confusion and difficulty. There are probably still some who believe that the old linked-battalion system can be maintained, but this is a dream. The whole tendency must be the other way, and any effort to prolong or reinstate the linked-battalion system must result in an immense increase of expenditure, coupled with an administrative breakdown.

Admitting, therefore, that the number of Long-Service troops required depends upon—

- (a) The strength of the Indian garrison,
- (b) The strength of the Colonial garrison,
- (c) The strength of the force which must be retained at home to create a circulation,¹
- (d) The strength of the depots required to supply drafts,

can we on this basis supply an answer to the questions which have been propounded? Can we

¹ The question of the maintenance of a Striking Force must also be considered in this connection. The Striking Force, however, may reasonably be included under item (c). It will be specially referred to at a later page.

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from our present resources provide both the Long-Service and the Short-Service Army? The answer is undoubtedly in the affirmative. By a judicious use of our present resources we can find the material for both. In the following chapter the problem of the Long-Service Army, the source from which it can be obtained, its numbers, and its duties will be discussed.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER VI.

1. The term "Long Service" has been applied to various terms of service at different times.

2. The failure of the plan of enlisting only for twenty-one years was demonstrated during the Crimean War.

3. Short Service was introduced in 1870 by Lord Cardwell, the term being six years with the colours.

4. In 1898 a limited number of men, and in 1902 the whole Army was enlisted for three years with the colours.

5. In 1904 a period of nine years' enlistment with the colours and three years in the reserve was adopted for the infantry, and in 1905 concurrent enlistment for Long and Short Service was begun; but the experiment was discontinued.

6. There must be concurrent Long and Short Service in the future.

7. Long Service alone is impossible, for it will produce no adequate reserve.

8. Short Service alone is impossible, for it will not supply the peace garrison of the Empire. Concurrent enlistment is therefore essential.

CHAPTER VII

THE LONG-SERVICE ARMY: PART I

HOW TO OBTAIN THE LONG-SERVICE RECRUIT.

It has been postulated in an earlier chapter that the work of garrisoning the Empire abroad in time of peace must be entrusted to battalions enlisted for Long Service, and that in order to provide for the necessary circulation of men between home and foreign stations, at least one-fourth of these battalions must be at home. The problem which now confronts us is how to obtain recruits for this Long-Service Army. In this, as in previous instances, it is convenient to deal with the infantry alone. In the statement presented to Parliament in 1904 it was assumed that the total number of battalions required were 104, of which one-fourth, or 26 battalions, was to be at home. For the whole of the 104 battalions recruits must be found. It is obvious that if all recruits were available for all the battalions an ample supply would be at hand, for the average number of recruits raised annually for the Infantry of the Line during the past four years is no less than 25,214, and this number has hitherto been found sufficient to maintain, not 104 battalions, but 156. For the particular battalions with which only we are dealing, however, all infantry recruits are not eligible. The Army abroad must, for the most part, be a "grown-up" army. India requires men of twenty years of age, and it is inadvisable to send younger men to tropical and

semi-tropical stations outside India. This limitation greatly curtails the number of recruits available. There are many who declare that the existence and enforcement of the age rule must preclude the possibility of forming Long-Service battalions in the manner suggested. It has been held and declared that in view of the large number of recruits under twenty who join the Army, a system which involves the maintenance of three battalions abroad for one at home stands self-condemned. It is impossible (such is the contention) to raise enough recruits of the required age. Men who enlist at the age of eighteen must, we are told, be kept at home till they are twenty, and in order that they may find a home during their period of growth, there must be a battalion at home to act as a nursery for every battalion abroad. In other words, the linked-battalion system becomes a necessity. The linked-battalion system will be examined in detail in a subsequent chapter. For the present it is sufficient to show that the argument to which reference has just been made is entirely fallacious.

THE AGE QUESTION.

In the year 1904, 42,642 men were enlisted for the Regular Army. Of these no less than 21,154, or 50 per cent., were nineteen years of age and upwards. The Annual Return for 1904 does not show how many of the latter number entered the Infantry; but the total number of Infantry recruits for the year, exclusive of the Guards, was 30,311. If we assume that the proportion which applies to all arms applies to the Infantry, this gives us a total of 15,000 recruits for the Infantry of the Line enlisted at the age of nineteen years and upwards. Is this contingent sufficient to furnish the number of men required for service in India? There can be but one answer: it is ample. Under anything

like normal conditions, the Indian demand is not large. It will steadily diminish as soon as the difficulty occasioned by the discharge of the three-years men has been got over. As soon as nine years' enlistment is thoroughly established, and we are called upon to make good only the deficit due to the loss of nine-years men, the average annual draft per battalion of 1,050 will fall to 120.¹ Lest, however, it be alleged that this is too sanguine a calculation, and that for some years to come, at any rate, the Indian draft requirements are likely to be above the normal, it will be well to take a somewhat higher figure for the purposes of our calculation, and to place the draft at 130 men per annum. On this basis, the 52 battalions in India will require 6,750 men. It is obvious that there need be no difficulty in finding this number out of the 15,000 men available. It is desirable, but it is not essential, that the battalions in the Colonies should be entirely composed of men of twenty years of age. They are not so composed at the present time, but it is obviously inexpedient that they should contain any men who would have to be replaced on mobilisation. At present (1906) there are 35 battalions abroad outside India. The strength of these battalions varies, but the average is about 850. The normal draft for a battalion of 850 Long-Service men is about 110 men. In other words, if the Colonial garrisons were to be maintained at their present strength, 3,850 men would be required to keep them full. All these men, if need be, could be provided out of the 15,000 recruits of nineteen years of age and upwards, to whom reference has been made. Of course, any diminution in the number of units abroad, or of the strength of such units, will diminish *pro tanto* the demand for drafts.

¹ The factors which decide the numbers of a draft are explained at page 173.

HOW TO FIND THE INDIAN DRAFTS.

But it will be said that nineteen is not twenty, and that while the Indian authorities insist upon having men of twenty years of age in the ranks, the recruits whom we have attributed to Indian service are only nineteen years old. This, however, is clearly not the fact. It would only be true if the whole of the 15,000 recruits had simultaneously completed their nineteenth year on the day on which the annual return was made up. The great majority are well over nineteen; some are over twenty. For draft purposes, the youngest of them may be regarded as nineteen and a half years old, for a depot service of six months is required from each man before he is passed on to his battalion. To this obligatory extension of six months must be added the time occupied by the voyage to India. As a matter of fact, there would be no difficulty whatever in selecting 6,750 men who fulfilled the Indian requirements in every respect, and if any difficulty were to arise it could easily be removed by a little adjustment at either end. The skies would not fall if a man were to be detained for eight months at the depot;¹ or if a limited number of men arrived in India three months before the completion of their twentieth year. The problem is complicated by the seasonal character of the Indian drafts, which can only be dispatched between October and March, but a little goodwill and intelligence can easily overcome this difficulty also. Even in extreme cases it need not involve an adjustment of over three months, so that, at the

¹ Eight months is, in fact, the period of recruit training for the Royal Marines at Walmer. It may be added that in the opinion of some well-qualified medical officers the time has come when the age-limit for Indian service may safely be reduced. It is believed that the improved sanitary conditions which exist in India and the multiplication of Hill Stations make it not only possible, but desirable, to send out men younger than has hitherto been the practice. But such a course is not recommended here.

worst, men will only be retained at home for three months in a depot, who would, under present circumstances, be kept for twelve months in a home battalion.

Nor must it be forgotten that the total of 15,000 men who enter the Infantry at the age of nineteen years and upwards does not exhaust the number of men who would be available for draft purposes. It has already been pointed out that a Long-Service Army must necessarily be supplemented by a Short-Service Army. The character and constitution of the latter are explained at length in a subsequent chapter.

It is sufficient to say here, that it is an essential feature of the constitution of such a Short-Service Army, that a certain number of men who desire to make their career in the Army, and who have completed their term of Short Service, should be permitted to extend their colour service and to pass direct to a Long-Service battalion. All men extending in this manner must necessarily be qualified by age for a foreign draft, and they may accordingly be added to the recruits who enlist in the first instance for Long Service.

THE PROPOSALS OF 1904.

Enough has been said to demonstrate that the argument against a Long-Service Army, based on the alleged inadequacy of recruits of suitable age, cannot be sustained; and that being so, we may proceed to examine the proposals which were made in 1904, and which had for their object the creation of a Long-Service Army, maintained, in the first instance, for the purpose of garrisoning the Empire in time of peace. It was proposed that as far as the Infantry was concerned, this army should consist of from 104 to 112 battalions, the number depending upon the requirements and the policy

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of the day. On the assumption that 52 battalions were to be maintained in India, and 26 in the Colonies, 26 battalions would be required at home to maintain an adequate circulation ; in other words, to give officers and men an opportunity of serving at home as well as abroad. The proposed establishment of the battalions was as follows :—

| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| India | 1,000 |
| Colonies | 850 |
| Home | 750 to 900 |

The question of how these battalions were to be maintained had to be considered. At present every battalion abroad is, or is supposed to be, maintained by drafts from a linked battalion at home. It is obvious that if 78 battalions are to be abroad, and only 26 at home, this practice cannot be adhered to. It was therefore proposed that in lieu of the linked battalion, each with its small regimental depot, there should be established an adequate number of large depots, each dealing with a group of battalions.¹ The system is practically the same as that which prevails in the Guards depot at Caterham, the Royal Marine depot at Walmer, the depot of the 60th Rifles and Rifle Brigade at Winchester, and, in a modified form, in the joint depots at Lichfield and Newcastle. It was proposed that the term of instruction at the depot for all men going abroad should be six months ; with a shorter period for men joining their battalions at home.²

It is from the sources described that a Long-Service Army can be obtained. It is by the methods suggested that it can be maintained and

¹ The whole of the arrangements for this purpose have been carefully worked out, and could be made operative at any time.

² This is an important point. It is obvious that if one-fourth of the men are discharged to their battalion after three months' training, a corresponding number can be maintained for nine months if necessary, without causing an excess on the total numbers provided for throughout the year.

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manipulated. It has been necessary for the sake of our argument to demonstrate at this stage that such an army can be maintained without making an excessive demand upon our recruiting resources. In a subsequent chapter reasons will be adduced in support of the view that the creation of such an army and its maintenance in the manner proposed are desirable, and indeed essential.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER VII.

1. A Long-Service Army requires "grown-up" recruits.
2. We recruit at present enough recruits of full age to meet the demands of the Long-Service Army.
3. The Indian drafts can be furnished from the men recruited at nineteen years of age and upwards, without the intervention of linked battalions.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LONG-SERVICE ARMY: PART II

EMPLOYMENT OF LONG-SERVICE MEN ON COMPLETION OF ENGAGEMENT.

ENOUGH has been said to show how the Long-Service Army can be recruited. But every soldier knows that entry into the Service is intimately bound up with discharge from it, and that the number and character of the recruits must to a large extent depend upon the prospects which are held out to him on completing his first term of colour service. It has often been alleged that the seven-years' term was the worst that could be chosen from the soldier's point of view: that a man enlisted at eighteen and discharged into civil life at twenty-five, without any knowledge of a trade, and with all organised labour banded against him, was in a most unfortunate position. It was further alleged that the liability to Reserve service for five years aggravated the difficulties of the situation. There can be no doubt that the charge was true, and that, despite the laudable efforts made by the officers and by various associations to find employment for the discharged soldier, many men were unable to obtain work, and others obtained work of unremunerative, and sometimes of a menial character.¹

It is most unfortunate that these conditions

¹ The question of the employment of discharged soldiers is dealt with more fully in Chap. XVI. p. 150.

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should continue to prevail. Under the system proposed there is no reason why they should do so.

Enlisted at nineteen, the Long-Service soldier would, in the ordinary course, be due for discharge to the Reserve at the age of twenty-six or twenty-eight. But though it would be open to him to leave the colours at this stage in his career, there is no reason why he should do so. It has already been explained that the necessary complement of a Long-Service Army is a Short-Service Army retained at home in time of peace. The character and constitution of that army are explained in the following chapter; it will suffice to say here that the Short-Service infantry would be composed of 70 or more battalions.

Nearly four-fifths of the men in these battalions would be enlisted for two years' colour service only. It is obvious that these Short-Service men cannot produce sergeants, and can only be looked to for the supply of a very limited number of corporals. A large number of non-commissioned officers would, therefore, be required from outside sources, and the natural source of supply would be the Long-Service battalions. Seventy battalions would require at least 3,500 non-commissioned officers, and, assuming that three-fifths of these are taken from the Long-Service Army, no less than 2,100 posts would be found for men who at, or shortly before, the expiration of their first term of colour service elect to prolong, and to continue their career as soldiers in the non-commissioned ranks of the Short-Service Army.¹

These men would serve on, if qualified, for twenty-one years and a pension. They would, of course, be available for service in the depots for

¹ It will be necessary to establish a Non-Commissioned Officers' School. Such an Institution has, in fact, been established tentatively and experimentally; but it is most important that it should be placed upon a recognised and permanent basis.

both Long- and Short-Service units, for instructional purposes in connection with the Militia and Volunteers, and for service abroad in peace time if necessary; but such service would be the exception, and not the rule. The number of men who would be absorbed in this way must necessarily be a large proportion of the men discharged from the Long-Service battalions. For be it remembered that we are dealing not with 156¹ battalions, but with 104, or 112 at the outside, and that the men in these battalions are enlisted for nine years with the colours. Deducting the men thus provided for, the residue of men of good conduct passing into the Reserve would be very small, and the problem of providing employment for them reduced to very manageable dimensions.

LONG SERVICE AND INDIAN SERVICE.
A FALLACY EXPOSED.

The proposal to enlist men for nine years with the colours and to create Long-Service battalions supplied from depots has been criticised by some of the many hasty and partially informed critics of the scheme of 1904, on the ground of its supposed tendency to lengthen the soldiers' term of foreign service. The criticism is simply the outcome of want of knowledge and clear thinking. On reflection, it is evident that the abolition of the linked-battalion system must have an effect the exact opposite of that which has been attributed to it.

At present battalions are abroad for ten, fifteen, and in some cases for twenty years. During this long period of absence a battalion is practically renewed many times. The officers and men who return to Southampton with a battalion at the end of its foreign tour are not those who embarked

¹ Ordered to be reduced, September, 1906, to 148.

from the same spot fifteen years before. If a single officer or man who was present on the earlier occasion survives to the latter, his existence is regarded as a phenomenon.

But, undoubtedly, the present system does condemn officers and men to a very long period of Indian service. The number of men available for India is small, and a private once dispatched at the age of twenty is almost certain to remain in India until his discharge to the Reserve, some seven or eight years later. But when once the linked-battalion system has been got rid of, there is no reason why this long term of Indian service should be permitted.

A self-contained battalion supplied with its annual drafts from a depot is independent, and can be moved from place to place as a battalion, without dislocating an elaborate system. Let us take an example. A battalion leaves England for India 900 strong, and in the same year receives its first draft, making the total up to 1,000. It remains four years and a half in India, and at the end of that time receives orders to proceed to South Africa. In its last year in India it dispenses with its draft, and reaches South Africa at a strength of 850. It remains in South Africa, as a complete and efficient unit, for two years and a half, and during that time it continues to receive drafts from the depot, but on a diminished scale. At the end of two years and a half it returns home, having again foregone its draft in the last year, and reaches England, still a complete battalion, from 700 to 750 strong.

It has been suggested that this simple process will add to the cost of the sea transport. This, too, is a fallacy. At present the whole battalion is transported from England to India and back many times during the tour; but the men so transported are drafts and time-expired men. Under

the proposed plan the number of men transported in a given time will be smaller than under the present system; and the fact that the battalion moves as a whole will make for economy, no less than for efficiency.

It is apparent that the adoption of this plan will prove most beneficial to the soldier whose nine years of active service will be spent in various parts of the world. Men will no longer pass the whole of their military lives in India, and a healthy and rational circulation will be established. There is no foundation for the statement that Long Service means long service in India. The reverse is the truth.

CONCLUSIONS.

It has been the object in this chapter to demonstrate the following facts:—

(a) A Long-Service Army can be formed on the present basis of recruiting.

(b) The age difficulty does not preclude the formation of a Long-Service Army.

(c) By a judicious connection between the Long-Service Army and the Short-Service Army which is its corollary, the future of long-service soldiers at the completion of their first term of colour service may be ensured.

(d) Long-service enlistment does not necessitate long service in India.

If these contentions have been established, much has been done to clear the ground for the consideration of the logical and inevitable outcome of a Long-Service Peace Army, namely, a Short-Service War Army. It is this subject which it is proposed to discuss in the immediately succeeding chapters.

In conclusion, one word of caution is necessary. It has been assumed in this and the preceding chapter that a colour service of nine years, followed

by three years in the First-Class Army Reserve, can be adopted with advantage. But it must be clearly understood that neither of the terms referred to is essential. There are good reasons for the adoption of both terms, and they were suggested after mature consideration as being, on the whole, the most convenient and the best in the interests of the Service. But neither the nine-years' nor the three-years' term is necessary to the scheme; and the author is well aware of the reasons which have led many good judges to advocate a longer term both of colour and reserve service. There is much to be said in favour of the prolongation; but if it be adopted in either case, the change should only be made after full consideration of the reasons which led to a preference being given to the nine and three years' arrangement.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER VIII.

1. Employment for long-service soldiers on completion of their first term of colour service may be found in connection with the Short-Service Army.

2. It is a fallacy to suppose that long service necessitates long "Indian Service."

3. The periods of service proposed in 1904, viz., nine years with the colours and three years with the Reserve, are not essential, but represent the balance of convenience.

CHAPTER IX

THE SHORT-SERVICE ARMY: PART I

THE SHORT-SERVICE ARMY THE COMPLEMENT OF THE LONG-SERVICE ARMY.

THE necessary complement to the Long-Service Army, for foreign service in time of peace, is the Short-Service Army, charged with the duty of producing the large Reserve needed to reinforce the Long-Service Army in time of war.

In the preceding chapters the composition and character of the Long-Service Army have been discussed. The present chapter will be devoted to a corresponding examination of the Short-Service Army. Here, again, it is convenient, for the purpose of illustration, to deal with the Infantry only, for the Infantry problem dominates all others.

The subject naturally divides itself into three important branches, namely, the question of numbers, the question of composition, and the question of the period of service.

THE QUESTION OF NUMBERS.

Assuming that a Short-Service Army be required, what should be its numbers? The answer to this, as to all other questions affecting numbers, must depend to a large extent upon policy; and policy is a changing factor which necessarily interferes

with exact calculation. It is desirable, therefore, to make certain assumptions as the basis of our argument, and for convenience it will be well to under-estimate, rather than to exaggerate, the possible demand for troops in time of war.

THE NUMBER OF UNITS.

It will be apparent that the organisation recommended is capable of almost indefinite expansion; and that if Parliament desires to increase our total available force, and is prepared to find the money for the purpose, the system here suggested provides a ready means for doing so. In the proposals laid before Parliament in 1904, provision was made for 71 Short-Service battalions, with a rank-and-file strength of 525, and with 30 to 35 officers per battalion. There is clearly nothing essential about the number 71. As a matter of fact, it corresponded with the military demands at the time, and the number of battalions proposed would have provided the Reserve then asked for. But the number of units is quite unimportant as compared with the principle upon which those units are raised and maintained.

How were the 71 battalions to be obtained? The answer to this question is important, because, if clearly understood, it is calculated to remove much prejudice and misconception. It was proposed that the 71 Short-Service battalions should be made up by a double process. Thirty-eight battalions of the Line were to be reduced in establishment and placed on a Short-Service footing in the manner described hereafter; 33 battalions of the Militia were to be added to the 38 Line battalions, and were to be organised on the same basis, and the 71 battalions were to form the infantry of the Short-Service Army. The term of service was to be the same for all

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men enlisted for short service, namely, two years with the colours and from six to ten years in the Reserve. This proposal was adversely criticised in some quarters, on the double ground that it constituted an undesirable interference with the Line, and that it practically abolished the Militia. It would be difficult to find a more incorrect description of the operation. The criticism was, indeed, based upon an entire misunderstanding. It would be truer to say that the intention of the change was to preserve both the Line and the Militia from a fate by which, unless some step of the kind were taken, both seemed destined to be overtaken.

THE UNION OF THE LINE AND THE MILITIA.

Why was this organisation proposed? It was proposed because it was the only one which was consistent with the retention of existing Line battalions. At present there are 156 battalions of the Line.¹ It has been demonstrated, and the fact is beyond dispute, that the whole of these 156 battalions are not required for the purpose of maintaining the peace garrison of the Empire.

But although a number of battalions are redundant for this particular purpose, they are not sufficient—especially if the men who compose them are enlisted for seven or nine years—to furnish the large Reserve which will be required in time of war. That Reserve can only be formed by enlisting men for Short Service.

The problem of how to find these Short-Service men, and how to train them, remains to be dealt with. We have seen that a certain number of Line battalions, which has been estimated at

¹ See note page 48.

DESTRUCTION OF LINE BATTALIONS 55

104, will ultimately be required for service abroad in time of peace, and must therefore be composed of Long-Service men. But having provided these 104 battalions, there remain 52 battalions of the Line unappropriated. What is to be done with them? To maintain them all at their full establishment and on a Long-Service basis, is not only illogical: it is extremely expensive. Ought they to be abolished? That is the question which must be decided. It cannot be too clearly understood that those who object to any change in the organisation of any of the Line battalions, are in reality doing their best to ensure the destruction of that which they desire to preserve.

When once the problem is understood, the nation, which undoubtedly desires economy, will not consent to maintain units that are not required.

THE REDUCTION OF LINE BATTALIONS.

But no one who is acquainted with the Army and its history could view without great concern the elimination from the Army List of such famous regiments as the 93rd Highlanders, the 100th Regiment, or the Connaught Rangers.¹

¹ The first 25 regiments in the Army List and the Cameron Highlanders (79th Regiment) have two battalions each. The 60th Rifles and the Rifle Brigade have each four battalions. The other Line Regiments are composed of two regiments which, until Lord Cardwell's day, had a separate existence, but which after 1870 were "linked" as two battalions of one regiment, *e.g.* the 35th (Royal Sussex) and the 107th (Bengal Infantry) are now the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Royal Sussex Regiment. And the 100th Royal Canadians and the 109th are now the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians).

These regiments, which from an historical point of view are the latest comers in the Army List, have earned a name and a fame which practically make their abolition impossible.

There are also seven of these composite regiments which have now four battalions: two of old standing representing either the two battalions of the original regiment, or two regiments linked in the

THE NUCLEUS BATTALION.

The destruction of a battalion means not only the loss of 600 or 700 men, but it means much more. It means, in the case of the 2nd Battalions of the older regiments, the destruction of a tradition created in some cases at the cost of a hundred years of effort and heroism. It means the loss of some thirty officers and some eighty non-commissioned officers, at a time when an addition to the number of the commissioned and non-commissioned ranks is recognised as the greatest need of the Army. It means the abolition of a cadre to which reserves can be added in time of war, and it means the reduction of the Reserve by the whole reserve product of the battalion. It is evident, therefore, that nothing but the strongest motives could justify the destruction of existing battalions. But it is not necessary to destroy battalions in order to reduce their cost. This simple secret has long been known to the Navy, and the formation of nucleus crews in the commissioned ships at all our great naval ports is a proof of the fact. The nucleus crew represents the cadre of a battalion. In peace time it represents a small number of men, and its cost is very small. But it contains within it the germ of the full complement of the fighting ship, and on the first alarm of war it will spring to life as a complete organism ready to engage the enemy in twenty-four hours. It is the principle of the nucleus crew which it was sought to apply to the threatened Infantry battalions in 1904. It

manner above described; and two new battalions which have been raised within the last few years. These 3rd and 4th Battalions might, no doubt, be absorbed or disbanded without any serious interference with the traditions of the regiment to which they belong; but even the absorption of these fourteen battalions, though justifiable under some circumstances, is most undesirable unless and until they have been replaced by other equally effective units taken from the Militia or elsewhere

was proposed to reduce their establishment, to pass through them a number of young soldiers, but to preserve their traditions, their organisations, their officers intact and capable of instant utilisation in time of war.

It cannot be too clearly realised that to reduce two battalions to a low establishment saves the country as much money as the destruction of one battalion, and that while in peace time the total cost is small, the full value of the two battalions is thus preserved intact for the purposes of war.

By what method a battalion can with advantage be reduced to a lower establishment; what is to be its composition when so reduced; and what are the functions which it is competent to perform,—these are matters which receive full explanation in a subsequent chapter. The point to which it is necessary to draw special attention here is that, if it be admitted that any of the existing Line battalions are in excess of our needs for ordinary peace purposes, they must be dealt with in one of two ways: they must either be abolished, or must be placed upon a reduced establishment; and that it is the latter alternative which is here recommended.

THE NUMBER OF BATTALIONS REQUIRED.

The actual number of the Line battalions which must eventually be either abolished or reduced must depend, as has been pointed out, upon policy. At the beginning of 1906 there were 87 battalions abroad and 71 at home, and on this basis not more than 16 battalions would become available for reduction. In the present chapter we have assumed that some of the battalions now serving abroad will be withdrawn, and that not more than 104 Long-Service battalions will eventually be

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required, leaving 52 superfluous battalions to be dealt with. But none of the figures given above are essential. Policy must settle the question of how many battalions are required for the peace garrison of the Empire; the balance, whatever it may be, will represent the material available as the basis of the Short-Service Army.

But whatever be the number of units so available, whether it be 16 or 52, the total is not large enough to furnish all that we require. It must be remembered that the Short-Service Army must comply with two requirements: it must create a large reserve of trained men capable of taking their part in war; but it must also provide a large number of cadres which, in time of war, can be readily expanded, and to which the Reservists can be summoned. What ought to be the number of units in the Short-Service Army? Here again there is no essential figure. The answer must depend primarily, as in all other questions of the kind, upon policy.

When we have decided upon the quantity of the output we desire, we shall be in a position to give a precise specification for the machine which is to produce it. The number of units must also be dependent upon the strength of each individual unit. Fifty battalions of 1,000 men may, for many purposes, be as good as a hundred battalions of 500 men. But, whatever may be the precise figure which the development of Army policy may lead us to adopt, there can be no doubt that we shall require more than 52 such units. Whence can more units be obtained? The answer is clear. The army proposed is essentially a territorial Short-Service Army. The territorial Short-Service Army of this country is the Militia. To the Militia, then, we must look for the additional units.

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WHY THE MILITIA ALONE CANNOT BE UTILISED.

It will be asked why, if this be the case, do we not look to the Militia alone to supply the whole of the units required? Why should Line battalions and Militia battalions be joined together? The answer is obvious, and its cogency will be realised when the alternative methods have been examined.

If it be the fact that certain Line battalions have become, or will become, redundant in the sense explained above, they must either be got rid of or placed on a Short-Service footing. Those who are of opinion that they should be got rid of can with perfect consistency and much reason, demand that the Militia alone should be called upon to furnish the Territorial Army.

Again, those who traverse the assumption which has been made above; those who are of opinion that the whole of the battalions of the Regular Army can be maintained upon their present footing,—that Parliament, having once realised that they are redundant for their present purpose and are only maintained in order to galvanise the linked-battalion system into a doubtful vitality, will continue to vote the money for their upkeep,—are equally justified in objecting to any union between the Line and the Militia. If 156 battalions of the Line are required and can be maintained, then it is clearly reasonable and possible to entrust the duty of furnishing the Territorial Army to the Militia alone.

But no such argument can consistently be used by those who agree that the cost of the Regular Army must be reduced, and are at the same time violently opposed to the destruction of historic Line battalions. If the conditions they desire to impose are to be fulfilled, then the union of the redundant Line battalions with the Militia is a necessary corollary.

THE TERRITORIAL ARMY AND THE MILITIA.

It is obvious that the next step is to inquire what number of Militia units should be added to the reduced Line battalions in order to make up the Territorial Army. We have already explained that the full and final answer must depend upon policy. For the purposes of our present argument we will assume that 71 battalions will suffice and, on the basis of 52 Line battalions being available, this will cause an indent on the Militia for 19 battalions. It is obvious, however, that if there be a serious intention to utilise the Militia as an integral portion of the Territorial Army, it would be advisable to utilise a much larger number of battalions than that mentioned. There need be no difficulty on this score. If once the principle be adopted and carried into practice, the fourteen 3rd and 4th battalions of the Line regiments above referred to (see page 56) may reasonably be got rid of.

There are, indeed, few Militia battalions which have not a longer record than these 14 Regular battalions. If the suggested course were adopted, 33 battalions of the Militia would at once be required ; this would leave 91 battalions of Militia untouched. But it is clear that such a policy as this is not complete. Its extension is really a question of money and requirements. In the original draft of the scheme as it was presented in 1904, it was proposed to utilise the whole of the Infantry Militia, in 80 battalions. This would, of course, have involved the amalgamation or absorption of a limited number of existing Militia battalions, but such a reduction would be an advantage in view of the weakness of some of the battalions and of the lamentable lack of officers. The consolidation of the Militia into 80 battalions

would, beyond doubt, add greatly to the prestige and efficiency of the Force. But be that as it may, the question of whether or not the whole of the Militia should be incorporated in the Territorial Army is one, primarily, of expense and of the extent of the military demand for men. The ideal is, undoubtedly, to utilise the whole Force as far as it can be made effective.

One word more remains to be said with regard to the amalgamation of the Line and the Militia in the Territorial Army. It has been said by some who have arrogated to themselves the right to speak for the Militia, that the plan is wholly objectionable because it involves the degradation of the Line and the destruction of the Militia. Such a criticism is a mere appeal to prejudice.

If the idea really exists on the part of the Regular Army that the Militia are unfit to work side by side with them, the sooner such an idea is got rid of the better. The Militia battalions are, and have for many years past been, the 3rd and 4th battalions of Line regiments; Linesmen and Militiamen have time after time fought side by side, and in the future the association must inevitably be even closer than it has been in the past. But, as a matter of fact, the statement that any such feeling exists is a fantasy. Nor is there any more truth in the contention that the utilisation of the Militia as part of a true Territorial Army is calculated to prove detrimental to the Militia itself. It is probably true to say that, by no other means can the Militia be saved from the extinction to which it is doomed if the present system be allowed to continue.

To suppose that the proposal fails to commend itself to Militia officers is also an entire mistake. Abundant testimony is available to show that such is not the case, but that, on the contrary,

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a very large number of Militia officers, comprising probably all those who have taken pains to understand the actual nature of the proposal made, hail with satisfaction a change which would restore their regiments to their old dignity and importance, would free them from the cut-throat competition with the Regular Army to which they are now exposed, and would make them a recognised and important part of the fighting force of the nation.

In the following chapter it is proposed to explain the constitution and working of the Short-Service battalions, the methods by which these battalions can be derived from the Regular Army on the one hand, and from the Militia on the other, and the duties which these battalions will perform both in peace and in war.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER IX.

1. The Short-Service Army is the complement of the Long Service Army.
2. The numbers of the Short-Service Army must be dependent upon policy.
3. The whole of the battalions of the Army are not required for long service, and must therefore be either—
 - (a) Abolished.
 - (b) Reduced in establishment.
4. The battalions so reduced are required for the purpose of forming a Reserve. They cannot form a Reserve unless the men are enlisted for short service; they should therefore be Short-Service battalions.
5. It is as cheap to reduce two units as to destroy one,—and much more to the advantage of the Service and the country.
6. It is better to retain redundant Line battalions as Short-Service battalions than to destroy them.
7. The number of Line battalions which may be considered as redundant depends upon the number of battalions required for service abroad in time of peace, and this in turn depends on policy.

8. The redundant Line battalions will under no circumstances be sufficient to furnish the whole of the Short-Service Army ; they must be supplemented from some other source.

9. The natural source from which the Line battalions can be supplemented is the Militia.

10. The amalgamation of Line battalions with Militia battalions for this purpose is consonant with the traditions of the Service and will be of advantage both to the Line and to the Militia.

CHAPTER X

THE SHORT-SERVICE ARMY: PART II

PERSONNEL OF THE SHORT-SERVICE BATTALION.

IN the preceding chapter some account was given of the source from which the Short-Service Army may be derived,¹ and the number of infantry units such an army should contain. In the present chapter the constitution and functions of such an army will be described in greater detail.

The strength of a Short-Service battalion as proposed is as follows:—

| | |
|--|--|
| Peace establishment . . | 20 officers, 525 rank and file. |
| War establishment and at annual training. } | 30 to 35 officers, 1,000 rank and file. |

The twenty officers referred to are officers of the Regular Army, making the Army their profession both in peace and war, and liable to serve abroad or at home in accordance with the exigencies of the Service.

The battalion will serve at home, exclusively, in time of peace, but the men will be enlisted for general service and will be sent abroad in time of emergency or war. The establishment of the battalion in peace time, as proposed in 1904, was 525—a number considerably in excess of the

¹ The transition period presents no difficulty. A Short-Service battalion may be formed from an existing Line battalion by drafting out of the latter such long-service men as are in excess of absolute requirements, and by enlisting recruits for two years' colour service up to the requisite total of 400. The process is a gradual one, and an exceedingly easy one.

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establishment of battalions on a peace footing in most foreign armies. Of the rank and file, 400 are men enlisted at the age of eighteen and upwards for two years' service with the colours and for a period of from six to ten years in the First-Class Army Reserve.¹ The remainder are long-service soldiers, either men who have enlisted for nine years with the colours and three years with the Reserve, or men who have extended for a period of twenty-one years' colour service. The presence of a considerable number of old soldiers in the ranks gives to such a battalion as that proposed an advantage which a foreign battalion does not possess. On the other hand, the effect of the conscription, which brings men to the colours in large batches and at stated times, gives to foreign battalions an advantage in the matter of training which we cannot hope to obtain to the same extent under our system of voluntary enlistment. For this reason it is greatly to be desired that service in the Short-Service battalions should be preceded, as in the case of service in the Long-Service battalions, by a period of instruction at a central depot. By this means the entry of the men in batches can to a large extent be ensured, and the battalion training can proceed from the day on which the soldier joins the colours. Such a proposal was, in fact, contained in the original scheme for the formation of a Short-Service Army, but it was not possible to proceed with the formation of depots until a sufficient number of Short-Service battalions had been created to furnish occupation for the staff of such depots, and this part of the scheme was, therefore, necessarily allowed to stand over.

¹ The term of Reserve service must depend upon the strength of the Reserve required. A ten-years' period of Reserve service would make the total service equal to that of a man enlisting for nine years with the colours and three in the Reserve, viz. twelve years in all. There are obvious disadvantages attached to a reserve service of ten years, but, as will be seen, in the present case these disadvantages are greatly diminished by the proposal to call out the reservists for training at regular intervals.

THE WORKING OF THE SYSTEM.

Let us now take the case of an individual battalion and see how the proposed system works. The battalion may be formed in the first instance from a Line battalion, or from a Militia battalion ; the process of formation in either case differs, but when once the battalion is formed, the procedure in both cases will be uniform.

The battalion will consist of 20 regular officers and 525 rank and file enlisted in the proportions already explained, viz. 125 for long service and 400 for two years. In addition to the 20 officers serving constantly with the battalion, there will be 10 or 15 officers of the Reserve.¹ These officers will be drawn from the same class as the best Militia officers ; they will join the headquarters of the battalion and serve with it for one year, during which time they will have an opportunity of making the acquaintance of their brother-officers and of learning their duties, and particularly the duty of handling men. At the end of a year these officers will pass to the First Reserve, remaining officers of the regiment, liable to be called up every year for training and liable, of course, to serve in time of war. Further reference to these officers and to their subsequent career with the regiment will be made on another page.

The men who enlist for two years will pass that time in the ranks, but at any time after the expiration of fifteen months from the date of enlistment, a man may, with the permission of his commanding officer, extend for long service. For six months he will continue to receive Short-Service pay, and in this respect will be in the same position as if he had passed the six months in the depot of

¹ It was decided in 1904-5 to add 5 officers to infantry battalions at home, and if this plan be carried out it will probably be advisable to make the number of Reserve officers in the Short-Service battalions 15.

a Long-Service battalion. At the end of the six months he will be classed and paid as a Long-Service soldier, and will be available for transfer to a Long-Service battalion. It is important to note that the right to extend is limited by the permission of the commanding officer, who in his turn will, of course, receive instructions from the Army Council. Under the old Short-Service system the War Office was absolutely dependent for its supply of men for foreign service upon the number of three-years men who chose to extend, and, as we have already seen, this number proved quite insufficient. Under the proposed arrangement there will be direct enlistment for Long-Service battalions, and extensions will only be permitted when it is considered desirable or necessary to supplement the Long-Service recruiting, or to reduce the numbers of the First-Class Army Reserve.

Soldiers who do not extend will pass to the First-Class Army Reserve at the end of two years, and will be liable to be called up at stated intervals for training with the battalion.¹

IN PEACE.

Now let us see what will be the course of procedure in peace and in war. In peace time the battalion, 525 strong, will be regularly trained by its own officers at its own headquarters. The life of the battalion will be continuous, and it will be lived in the district with which the regiment of which it forms a part is connected. The officers of the Reserve living in the locality will always have an opportunity of visiting the regimental mess and keeping up their acquaintance with their brother-officers throughout the year. Those who know how forlorn a rendezvous an ordinary infantry

¹ Under the existing law this training may not exceed fifteen days. It will probably be desirable to extend the period to twenty-eight days.

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depot, with its struggling mess and its ever-shifting personnel affords to the Militia officer at the present time, will appreciate the value of this change.

Once in every year the battalion will be mobilised, and one, two or three categories of the Reserve will be called out for training. The Reserve officers will also join. The battalion will then go into camp or to manœuvres a thousand strong, and with the full complement of 30 officers. The men will rejoin their comrades, and will fall back naturally into their old places under officers whom they know.

IN WAR.

The procedure in the event of war will resemble that of mobilisation in peace, with some important differences. For foreign war a soldier must be over twenty years of age, and it is obvious that the bulk of the men actually serving in a Short-Service battalion must be disqualified by reason of their not fulfilling this condition. It is not possible to lay down exactly what would be the proportion of men serving with the colours who must be left behind. But it will undoubtedly be large; it has been estimated at 128, and there seems no reason to doubt the correctness of the estimate. To make up the deficiency created by the withdrawal of men under age, and to raise the battalion to its war strength of 900 or 1,000 men, it will be necessary to make large drafts upon the Reserve; and probably three or four categories will have to be recalled to the colours at once.

THE RESERVE A SUBSTITUTE OR A SUPPLEMENT?

It has been objected to this plan that it involves the very consequence which the present author has on more than one occasion deprecated, and that it makes the Reserve a substitute for, not a supplement

to the men serving. The charge is undoubtedly well founded. Such to a large extent must be the inevitable result, not of Short-Service enlistment, but of enlisting at eighteen. In foreign armies the recruit is taken at a later age than in our own, and, moreover, is, as a rule, called upon to serve only in temperate climates and under familiar conditions. When a German Infantry battalion is mobilised in the autumn, it discards no men on account of insufficient age; but it does discard a small number of the last-joined recruits, because they have not yet received sufficient training to fit them for service in the field.

If our enlistment age were raised to twenty, our reserves would supplement, and not replace the men serving, and in all Long-Service battalions this would be the actual operation.

So long as enlistment at eighteen is permitted there will always be a large number of boys serving in the Army who must be left behind in the event of a war in India or other hot country. Under existing arrangements every battalion in the Army contains a proportion of these boys. Under the proposed arrangement they will be found only in the Short-Service battalions; the Long-Service battalions making up their war strength by a small addition of their own reservists. It would, of course, be better if no man had to be discarded from the Short-Service battalions. But it must not be forgotten that the mobilisation of these battalions will be very different from the mobilisation of battalions under the existing system, and for this reason: men recalled to the colours will belong to the latest categories discharged to the Reserve, and will therefore have been recently in touch with the battalion. Moreover, inasmuch as it is a feature of the system that all reservists should at stated times be recalled to the colours for a month's training, the reservists will be familiar with their work, and will come

back to their places before they have had time to forget what they learnt in the ranks. It is not pleasant to think what may happen in the case of some of the existing reservists, who, having been enlisted at the age of eighteen and discharged at the age of twenty or twenty-one, may be recalled from the Reserve after eight, nine, or even ten years in civil life, without having undergone any training whatever in the interval.

An obvious remedy for the defect complained of would be to increase the strength of the peace battalion. If the battalion numbered 1,000 men instead of 525, and the proportion of Long- and Short-Service men respectively remained unaltered, it would be possible to retain on mobilisation some 300 Short-Service men of one year's service and upwards. By the addition of 350 reservists the battalion would then be made up to 900 strong. Thus—

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Long-Service men serving | 250 |
| Short " " " | 300 |
| Reservists | 350 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 900 |
| | <hr/> |

But the objections to this plan are serious. It practically involves halving the number of cadres available in time of war; and with the diminution in the number of cadres there must follow a corresponding, though not necessarily proportional, reduction in the number of officers. Moreover, the question of barrack accommodation would present great difficulties. All our existing Infantry barracks and many of our depots can accommodate 500 men; many depots can be made available for this number by slight and inexpensive additions; but none of the ordinary depots and few of the barracks will house a thousand men.

Fortunately, the objection which has been raised is not so serious as it appears at first sight. To

bring back more than half a battalion from the Reserve is undesirable when many of the reservists are men who have been some years in civil life, and who have received no training since they left the colours.

But in the case of the Short-Service battalions formed as proposed, the situation will be a different one. The men of the first category recalled will have left the colours within the twelve months preceding mobilisation. The men of the second category will have been trained with the battalion during the year in which mobilisation takes place. In other words, nearly 400 men will be soldiers practically under training. It must be remembered, moreover, in discussing this question, that under existing conditions the evil complained of exists, and extends to the whole Army. Many battalions mobilised in 1900 required from 400 to 500 men from the Reserve to make them up to war strength.

THE SHORT-SERVICE BATTALION MOBILISED.

We have now the battalion made up to war strength and composed as follows:—

Officers : 20 officers on the active list.
10 officers of the First Reserve.

30

125 Long-Service N.C.O's. and men.
272 Short-Service men over twenty years of age.
503 Short-Service Reservists.

Total . 900 N.C.O's. and men.

But this will not conclude the operation of mobilisation. It is evident that if the period of Reserve service be ten years, the Reserve will in time reach a figure greatly in excess of the number actually required to bring up the battalion to war

strength. If we assume that four categories of the Reserve are recalled to the colours on mobilisation, there will still remain available—

(a) All the men serving with the colours who have been discarded on account of insufficient age.

(b) Six categories of the Reserve not required for mobilisation of the battalion.

THE SECOND BATTALION.

Here are the materials for a second battalion, a battalion which will occupy somewhat the same position as that of a Landwehr battalion.¹

It is obvious, however, that a collection of trained men cannot be regarded as a battalion unless it possesses its proper complement of officers. It is one of the peculiar, and perhaps one of the most attractive features of the Short-Service Army, that such officers would be available. It has already been pointed out that one-third of the officers of the Short-Service battalions will serve for a year only with the colours, and will then pass into the First-Class Reserve. These officers, who will enter as second lieutenants, may, while serving in the First-Class Reserve, reach the rank of junior major in the battalion. In many cases the officers in question, being engaged in business or otherwise occupied, may not desire to prolong their service in the First Reserve for many years. There are, however, many who, having served in time of peace, may be glad to retain the privilege of serving with their former comrades in time of war; and to these the proposed organisation offers an easy and attractive method of gratifying this ambition. It is proposed that officers on retiring from the First-Class Reserve may pass to a Second-Class Reserve

¹ The composition of a Landwehr battalion is not the same as that of a Short-Service battalion as described above; but the latter will occupy somewhat the same position in regard to the first and second battalions of the regiment as the Landwehr does to the first-line battalions.

with a step of rank and a retaining fee. Thus, a captain after serving seven years with the First-Class Reserve may find it incompatible with his business to come up for an annual monthly training. He will, if he so desires, be permitted to retire with the rank of major, and with a retaining fee which he will receive as long as he continues in the Second Reserve. In course of time a considerable number of officers will have entered the Second Reserve and, on mobilisation, will be available as officers of the second battalion, which will at once be furnished with its lieutenant-colonel, its majors, its captains, and possibly with a few subalterns, but the subalterns will require to be supplemented. Thus, for the first time, a true Territorial Reserve will have been formed with officers not only trained to their work, but trained in association with the men whom they will be called upon to command.

There can be no doubt that the entry of officers both into the First- and Second-Class Reserve would be greatly facilitated if the wise recommendation of the Duke of Norfolk's Commission were to be put in force, and the office of Deputy-Lieutenant were in the future to be reserved for gentlemen who have borne the King's Commission in the Royal Navy, the Regular Army, the Militia, and possibly also in the Volunteers.¹

SHORT-SERVICE BATTALIONS IN RELATION TO LONG-SERVICE BATTALIONS.

No description of the organisation and duties of a Short-Service battalion would be complete without some reference to the relation of these battalions to the Long-Service Army. Among the somewhat hasty criticisms of the proposal to establish a Short-Service Army is that which represents such an

¹ It must not be forgotten that Deputy-Lieutenants' commissions are at present issued under the Militia Act. The recommendation referred to was embodied in the proposals of 1904.

arrangement as certain to effect a sweeping change, which must disturb the interior economy of our regiments and must place a certain number of officers in an inferior, or even in a degrading position. The error—for an error it is—arises from an imperfect comprehension of what is the actual practice in the Army at the present time.

Line regiments are composed of two battalions, of which one is at home and the other abroad.¹ Such a distribution is indeed an essential feature of the linked-battalion system, and any departure from it is the result of a breakdown of that system.

The foreign battalion is abroad for a period which varies from twelve to as much as eighteen or even twenty years. The other battalion, unless serving on "Short Tour,"² in which case it is officially regarded as being at home, remains in the United Kingdom. It is scarcely necessary to point out that neither officers nor men actually remain abroad for these long periods, save in very rare instances. Officers exchange, or are moved from one battalion to another; a series of drafts constantly renews the battalion abroad by men from the battalion at home. But officially, one battalion is for twelve, eighteen, or twenty years a Foreign-Service battalion, the other a Home-Service battalion. No change in the principle of this arrangement is contemplated. Officers will pass from one battalion to another as at present; men, on extension of their service and on reaching the age of twenty, will pass from the battalion at home to the battalion abroad, as at present.

One change there will be—an attempt has been made to represent it as a serious one—as a matter of fact, it is a question of very unimportant, and

¹ The four-battalion regiments are dealt with, in theory, on the same principle as those having two battalions. Two battalions are supposed to be abroad and two at home.

² See p. 165.

indeed unessential detail. It is true that the colours and mess plate of the Short-Service battalions will, under the proposed arrangement, never go abroad, save in case of war or of great emergency. But this fact constitutes no hardship; or if hardship there be, it is one which has for years been inflicted upon some of the most distinguished regiments in the Army, and has been regarded by them as a privilege, not as a grievance. At the present time the Household Cavalry and the Brigade of Guards serve exclusively at home in time of peace. Certain Cavalry regiments, such as the "Royals" and the "Scots Greys," claimed, and until a very recent date enjoyed a similar immunity from foreign service in time of peace. The dispatch of these regiments to India was regarded by many as an unjustifiable infringement of a valued privilege. The condition of service at home in peace time has always been the distinguishing feature of the Militia, who indeed, as far as the law is concerned, are under the same restriction in time of war. It will be seen, therefore, that the objection to a Territorial Short-Service Army on the ground of its involving the permanent retention of officers and men at home, is a fanciful one. Should this fanciful objection, however, be regarded as a serious one, it is easy to provide for periodic changes between the battalions of a regiment by which each shall in turn become the Foreign-Service battalion. But there is not the slightest reason to believe that in practice the need for any such arrangement would be felt.

THE TERRITORIAL QUARTERING OF THE BATTALIONS.

The question of how and where the Short-Service battalions should be quartered is an important one. The question has been thoroughly examined, and

as a result of such examination it has been made apparent that the cost of quartering these battalions in their territorial districts would be less than that involved in the completion of the barrack schemes which are considered necessary for the accommodation of our existing force on its present basis. That the question of cost cannot present a serious obstacle is indeed self-evident. The amount of barrack accommodation in the United Kingdom is perfectly well known. In 1904 there were 84 Infantry barracks and 61 establishments serving as depots.¹

But on the basis proposed, the total number of barracks and depots required for both the Long- and Short-Service Armies is less than the number of barracks and depots actually available. Some of these buildings, therefore, are clearly superfluous, and can be disposed of. That there are many barracks and depots in our large towns which ought to be got rid of, every soldier knows perfectly well. Some of these buildings occupy sites of great value, and the fact that they are of value frequently indicates that they are unsuitable for military purposes. It seems reasonable, therefore, that in the interests of economy and efficiency alike, some of our barracks and depots should be sold, and the proceeds applied to erecting new buildings in more suitable places, or to enlarging existing depots which are not quite big enough to accommodate the Short-Service battalions.

There can be little doubt that if the Short-Service battalions were to be quartered in their districts, the Army would greatly benefit. At present many of our barracks are in a scandalous condition. Built in some cases as much as 150 years ago, or designed in accordance with the ideas of the eighteenth

¹ The total number of depots was 69; but there being a certain number of double depots, the number of buildings actually available was as stated above.

century, the barracks tend to become worse from year to year. The reason is not far to seek. The officers and men quartered in an Infantry barrack under the existing system know that when they leave it, they leave it for ever, and that in all human probability not one of them will ever set foot inside it again. They know, moreover, that they will be charged barrack-damages when they go out, and it is not in human nature that under these circumstances, either officers or men should take the slightest pains to improve or beautify their temporary home; nor is there any great inducement to the residents in the locality to contribute towards the comfort of the regiment which is temporarily quartered within its limits.

We have now seen what is the nature and constitution of the proposed Long- and Short-Service Armies respectively. It has been demonstrated that without putting any strain upon our resources, both armies can be raised and maintained; that having been raised, each will fulfil a definite function in peace time, and will help to perform a common duty in time of war. With respect to the Short-Service battalions, it has been shown that they will add greatly to our numerical strength; that they will furnish us with a large addition to the number of our trained officers; that they will continue and not destroy the traditions of our regiments, and that they will form an effective link between the long-service soldier of the Regular Army and the territorial and localised army of which the nation, by common consent, stands in need.

In the immediately succeeding chapters the question of the Reserve for the Army will be considered, and the relative merits of the Linked-Battalion system, as it now exists, and of the Depot system which it is proposed to substitute for it, will be discussed.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER X.

1. The constitution of a Short-Service battalion as proposed is as follows :—

| | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|--------------------|
| Peace establishment | . | . | 20 officers. |
| " | " | . | 525 men. |
| War | " | . | 30 to 35 officers. |
| " | " | . | 1,000 men. |

But this peace establishment is recommended for the sake of convenience, and not as an essential figure.

2. 400 of the rank and file are enlisted for two years with the colours, and from six to ten years with the Reserve.

3. The remainder of the rank and file are enlisted for long service.

4. Men enlisted for short service may extend under certain conditions.

5. Short-Service battalions will be called out for training each year, and on such occasions the Reserve officers and a portion of the Reserve will also be called out.

6. The battalion will have 20 regular officers and 10 to 15 officers serving one year with the colours, and afterwards with the Reserve.

7. Officers of the Reserve should obtain certain privileges on retirement, and may be retained as officers of a Second Territorial Reserve.

8. The surplus reservists available after mobilisation will furnish a second battalion officered by the Second Reserve of officers.

9. The retention of battalions at home in peace time will not injure the prestige of the battalion or inflict injury upon officers or men.

10. Barrack accommodation can be found for the Short-Service battalions without undue cost.

CHAPTER XI

THE REASONS FOR ADOPTING TWO YEARS' COLOUR SERVICE

THE SHORT-SERVICE TERM AT HOME AND ABROAD.

THE criticism which was directed against the proposals made in 1904 was largely based upon an imperfect comprehension of the proposals themselves, and a failure to regard them as a whole. Many of the criticisms were mutually destructive, and others were directed to the establishment of points of disagreement and difference where no real divergence of view existed. But after making full allowance for misconception and misrepresentation, there remains one important ground of difference between those who approve and those who disapprove the scheme.

That there must be a Long-Service Army is beyond question ; that there must also be a Short-Service Army, and that this army must be liable to serve abroad in time of war, is also axiomatic. The Short-Service Army may be called by many names, but that under some name or another it must be created, admits of no doubt.

When, however, we come to the question of the period of colour service which ought to be laid down for the Short-Service Army, there is an undoubted difference of opinion between those whose agreement on other matters is practically absolute as to

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substance. The difference is real, but it is very slight. How slight, the reader will be able to judge after perusing the statements contained in this chapter.

In the proposals laid before Parliament in 1904 two years' colour service was prescribed for the Short-Service Army. In the Report of the Norfolk Commission six months' preliminary training and six weeks' annual training were recommended for the Militia. The present actual length of the Militia training is forty-nine days preliminary, and twenty-eight days yearly.

The maximum training for Volunteers in camp is fifteen days, to which, of course, must be added any drills or exercises performed at other times.

For convenience' sake it may be added that the Japanese period of service is three years with the colours, while in France and Germany the term has recently been reduced from three years to two.

There are some officers of distinction in our own Army who entertain a strong opinion to the effect that a minimum training of three years is necessary to make the British recruit into a serviceable soldier.

We have, then, a series of alternatives which may conveniently be embodied in a table thus :

| BRITISH ARMY. | | |
|---|----------|---------------|
| | Colours. | Reserve. |
| 1. Short Service in the Army for all arms up to October, 1904; for the Guards and Horse and Field Artillery till July, 1906 | 3 years | 9 years |
| Proposed 1904-5 for Infantry of the Line of Short-Service Army . . . | 2 years | 6 or 10 years |
| Actual Militia regulations— | | |
| Preliminary | 49 days | None |
| Annual | 28 days | None |
| Militia, as proposed by Norfolk Commission— | | |
| Preliminary | 6 months | None |
| Annual | 6 weeks | None |
| Volunteers, Maximum in Camp . . . | 15 days | None |

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FOREIGN ARMIES.

| | With Colours. | Reserve (1st) | Landwehr (1st Levy) | Landwehr (2nd Levy) | Landsturm. |
|---------|------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|--|
| GERMANY | 2 to 3 years | 5 years (2 train- ings, 8 weeks each) | 5 years (2 train- ings, 8 to 14 days each) | Till 39 years of age | Up to and including the age of 45 |
| | With Colours. | Active Reserve. | Territorial Army. | Territorial Reserve. | |
| FRANCE | 2 years | 11 years (2 trainings of 4 weeks each) | 6 years (1 training of 2 weeks) | 6 years (and no training) | |
| | With Colours. | Reserve. | Reserve Army (Kobi). | Conscript Reserve. | National Army. |
| JAPAN | 3 years | 4½ years (2 train- ings of 60 days) | 10 years | 12½ years | Up to 40 years of age |

To this summary it is perhaps worth while to add the suggestion recently made by a well-known writer on military questions who unhesitatingly condemns all the various periods of training above referred to as excessive and unnecessary, and appears to consider that efficient soldiers can be made by inducing men to take part in occasional drills in the intervals of their ordinary avocations.

In order not to do injustice to this remarkable scheme it is well to quote textually :

"The only means," says the writer, "whereby we can induce good men to come into our second-line army is to adapt our system and our periods of training to the employments of the men who will take service in it. The two-years'-colour-service plan appeals to no man in employment. One year, six months, three months are in the same category. The Volunteer system alone, at the present time, and *apart from compulsory attendance at camp*,¹ harmonises the requirements of preliminary training with the occupations of the employés."

¹ The italics are the Author's.

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And these men, who are not even to have the advantage of the week's training in camp which is thought necessary for the Volunteers, are to be under no obligation whatever to serve abroad in time of war. This proposal represents the minimum amount of training and the loosest terms of service which have hitherto been recommended by any student of our military problem.

THE CONDITIONS WHICH REGULATE THE LENGTH OF TRAINING.

It will be seen that on the question of the length of service with the colours there is a great variety of opinion in this country, and a somewhat remarkable consensus of opinion in all other countries. In view of this diversity and this agreement, it is interesting to make some inquiry into the reasons which can be adduced in favour of the respective periods recommended. Before doing so, however, it is necessary, in this country at any rate, to recall the one purpose for which soldiers are drilled, instructed, and maintained. That purpose is to succeed in war against a probable enemy. How little this truth is appreciated in this country is very apparent to those who study controversial literature on military subjects.

The prevailing attitude was well expressed by a Volunteer officer who, writing anonymously to the newspapers, declared that in his opinion the regulations must be made to suit the convenience of officers and men, and that any attempt to compel officers and men to conform to the regulations was to be condemned and was destined to failure. There is no truth more dangerous than a half-truth. It is of course perfectly true that regulations which are drawn up without any regard to the convenience of those whom they affect, are

in most cases—though not in all—regulations which require amendment. But the dictum of the officer referred to above covers a much wider ground than this, and, moreover, faithfully represents the views of a great number of people. It would, however, be hard to find a more dangerous and misleading rule for our guidance, and for this reason. The one consideration which ought to override every other is entirely left out of account. One great essential condition dominates the whole, and until this condition has been fulfilled, all questions of convenience, popularity, and so on are meaningless and dangerous.

The true question to be answered is this—Will the regulations produce officers and soldiers fit not only to engage in war, but to succeed in war? Unless this question can be answered in the affirmative, all considerations of personal convenience, goodwill, and good intentions must be set aside as wholly irrelevant.

There is a popular and prevailing idea that a man or boy confers some great favour upon his country by consenting to take part in military exercises. It is difficult to see that this idea rests on any sound basis. If a man or boy has not time to fit himself to be a soldier, he is in no way to blame; but it is not wise to ignore the fact, "*On ne badine pas avec la guerre.*" If an individual cannot learn to be a soldier, we must accept the fact; but nothing is gained by pretending that it is not a fact. The rules of war are inexorable, and there is no ground for supposing that they are ever modified to suit individual convenience. Success in war, like success in everything else, can be achieved only by effort and sacrifice. It would be a very agreeable thing if without effort or sacrifice we could be certain of success, but there seems no reason whatever to anticipate that a special interposition of Providence will be made on

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our behalf; or that we, as a nation, shall be able to create, as a sort of by-product of our occupations and amusements, that which other nations believe can only be won by organisation, hard work, special education and arduous application.

AN ANALOGY FROM CIVIL LIFE.

It is remarkable that, in matters of which we have greater experience than we have of war, we do not entertain such loose ideas as those of the officer to whose incorrect method of thinking attention has been drawn. The professions of surgery and medicine, like the profession of arms, require a certain amount of study and devotion on the part of their members.

The governing body of the Royal College of Surgeons demands that before a student is allowed to practise on the human body, he shall give adequate proof that he has mastered, at any rate, some of the mysteries of the art of surgery. A standard of accomplishment is fixed, and it is required that all aspirants shall come up to it.

But, according to the military analogy which has been quoted, it should be permissible for a student to say, "I desire to be a surgeon. I am willing to take my part in the work of the profession, but I really cannot give the time requisite to enable me to pass these tiresome examinations. I can and will give up an hour a week to studying a text-book, and I will walk through a surgical ward once a month; but my avocations will not permit of my doing more than this. I have given evidence of my goodwill, it now only remains for you to give a proof of your appreciation by lowering your examination to the level of my accomplishment." In practice, as we all know, such a proposal would not meet with favour; and yet it differs very little, if at all, from that which

some persons would have us accept as reasonable when applied to the Army.

On only one hypothesis can it be shown that the analogy is incorrect. If it be the case that training and preparation are unnecessary to fit officers and men for the ordeal of war, then the whole of the argument which has been set forth above falls to the ground. But if the contrary be true, the argument undoubtedly stands.

It will perhaps be said that it has never been suggested that no training and no preparation are required, and that the only question at issue is whether the particular amount of training proposed be sufficient. Such a contention is reasonable, and deserves careful examination. At the same time it is necessary to point out that the training and preparation demanded by the extreme advocates of "go-as-you-please soldiering," are so microscopic as to be practically equivalent to no training at all.

Let us, however, assume that we have to deal only with those who offer a very short period of training as a considered substitute for the longer periods which have hitherto been regarded as necessary, both in this country and abroad.

We must then ask ourselves what is the weight of evidence in support of any one of the various views which have found favour. Is the weight of evidence in favour of three years, two years, one year, six months, six weeks, a fortnight, or no training at all?

The question is one of great interest, and deserves to be considered dispassionately.

THE TWO-YEARS PERIOD.

A great deal of criticism has been directed against the selection of two years as the period best suited for the colour service of Short-Service battalions. Much of this criticism has been un-

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informed, and has been characterised, moreover, by the strangest contradictions. While, on the one hand, it has been laid down that a two-years' training is altogether inadequate for the creation of an efficient soldier, it has been urged on the other hand with equal warmth that the period of two years is excessive, and that a training of six months, of three months, of a fortnight, or even of a few casual evenings during the year is all that is really needed to fit the British civilian to cope with the trained armies of Europe.

Nay, more ; so imperative has been the necessity for finding some stick to beat the official dog with, that critics have not been wanting who, almost in the same breath, have denounced the two-years period as wholly inadequate, and also as being greatly in excess of military needs.¹

Indeed, the criticism has been so uninformed, so unreasoned, and so conflicting that for all practical purposes it may be disregarded. The facts of the situation are plain enough. Two years is not an essential period ; the system which has been proposed in no way depends upon the acceptance or abandonment of this particular term of colour service. There are, however, strong reasons for believing that the two-years period is, on the whole, the best. The reasons why two years were approved are simple enough. In the scheme, as originally drafted by the Secretary of State, a short-service term of fifteen months was proposed. Of these fifteen months, three were to be passed at a large depot and twelve with the colours. If this period had been acceptable from the military point of

¹ " Mobs of a thousand men apiece whom it is intended to pass off as battalions of British Infantry." Such was the phrase of one such critic when describing the proposed Short-Service battalions. Two days later there appeared in the same journal, and apparently from the same pen, an urgent appeal in favour of training one-half of the troops required in war time for six months only, and under officers almost as untrained as themselves.

view, there can be no doubt that it would have had great advantages. It would have involved only a short extension of the existing period of Militia training, and it would have created a great reserve very rapidly.

MILITARY OPINION AND ITS JUSTIFICATION.

As a matter of fact, with one important exception, every military authority was opposed to the term as being too short. One or two soldiers of eminence regarded two, or even three years as being inadequate, but the general consensus of opinion was in favour of two years, and in deference to this military opinion the two-years term was selected.

There are, however, one or two important considerations which tend to reinforce the military opinion in this matter. The two-years term for Infantry training is identical with that of the German and French Armies. It is also a convenient term for our own Army. The medical regulations very properly forbid a young man to serve in India until he is twenty years of age. But recruits are taken at eighteen, and there is, therefore, an obvious convenience in an arrangement which allows the short-service men to complete their term in battalions serving at home, leaving them free to depart for India directly, should they elect to extend their service at the end of the two years.

It has been objected that the introduction of the two-years term was an unfortunate and disturbing innovation calculated to introduce confusion into the Army, and to interfere with the unbroken tradition of Army service. Such an objection is, of course, quite groundless. In December, 1903, the whole of the Army was being enlisted upon a three years' colour engagement. Except that

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the two years' colour service took the place of three, there was no disturbance and no change.

As a matter of fact, it is absolutely certain that short service must be resorted to, whatever name may be given to the particular system under which it is recreated.

Whether the exact period of training ought to be two years, or less or more, is a question which is open to argument. The present chapter has been devoted to proving that in many respects two years is a convenient period, and is the one approved by almost universal experience. It may be, however, that a shorter period will suffice, and if so, a shorter period should be adopted. But it must not be forgotten that the object of training is not to make a good "drill," but a good soldier. The two things are not necessarily identical. The children in a reformatory, the inmates of an asylum, may be very good "drills," and very often are; it does not follow that they will be good soldiers. The qualities required in a good soldier are a sense of discipline, obedience, promptitude in action, confidence in his officers, physical endurance, and skill in arms. A thorough drilling contributes towards the formation of one or two of these qualities; but it by no means produces them all, a fact which is too often forgotten.

A POINTLESS EXPERIMENT.

In this connection it is permissible to refer to a somewhat droll experiment which has recently been made, and which has attracted a certain amount of public attention.

In the spring of 1906 a retired officer, with the encouragement and assistance of a well-known journal, undertook the military training of a company of selected individuals in a camp at Hounslow Heath. The period of training was to be six months,

and the object was to demonstrate that, by following the example set by the enterprising officer in question, a revolution might be effected in the method of training our Army for war.

It is difficult to understand the grounds for this belief, and it is even more difficult to comprehend why it was thought necessary to make the experiment at all. As a matter of fact, nothing whatever has been proved or could be proved by it, which was not already perfectly well known to all the world. That it is possible to drill a hundred selected young men by continuous application for six months no one has ever doubted. There was not the slightest necessity for a visit to Hounslow Heath to learn this elementary truth.

On any day in any month in the year, the process and its results can be studied at the Royal Marine Depot at Walmer. Every month a company of recruits is dispatched to the divisional headquarters; and this company—composed of ordinary young men, instructed by very capable but quite unadvertised officers, patronised by no newspaper, and inspected by no one but the commandant of the depot—will do all, and more than all, that the Hounslow company has ever accomplished. Three years ago a splendid gymnastic display earned the applause of the spectators at the Military Tournament. There was not a fault or a flaw in the performance, and yet every one of the large detachment which occupied the arena was a Marine recruit of not more than four months' service.

The officers of the Royal Marines at Walmer and the officers of the Guards at Caterham know perfectly well, that any squad of fairly intelligent young men can be taught the elements of soldiering in six or even three months.

That much, indeed, is common knowledge. But let us follow the matter a little further. Let the

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boy from the training ship, the Marine, or the soldier from the depot go straight back to civil life at the conclusion of his course; let him become a sailor, a printer, a factory hand, a railway porter; let him marry and settle down; and then recall him to the ship or the colours at the end of seven years, and ask the captain of the one or the colonel of the other what use they have for him. The answer will be brief and conclusive: "We do not want him."

It is not the fact that a man has learnt and forgotten what may be called the "tricks of the trade" that makes him an efficient and trustworthy sailor or soldier. The habit of obedience, familiarity with emergency and danger, the power of endurance, adaptability under all circumstances: these are the qualities which make men effective in war. If these, and the great moral qualities which make for success in war, can be imparted and ineradicably fixed in the mind by a six-months' course, then indeed a great problem has been solved. Unluckily the question is one of those which will be finally decided only on the field of battle; and that is the last test which the general public of this country regards as being of importance in matters connected with the military art. It is sufficient, however, to say here that the consensus of military opinion is not in favour of a period of six months' training, and that for reasons which are referred to elsewhere (see page 198) any period less than a year is detrimental to recruiting, involves unnecessary expense, and effects a very small economy in money.

But be this as it may, the point which this chapter is intended to enforce is a very simple, and by no means a controversial one. It is this, that two years, as the period of training for Short-Service soldiers, was deliberately adopted in deference to

the strongest and most definite recommendation of the military authorities, often repeated and urgently insisted upon.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XI.

1. Under whatever name it may be designated, there must be a Short-Service as well as a Long-Service Army.

2. The question of the length of training of the short-service soldier is one on which opinions differ.

3. The most usual period in foreign armies is two years with the colours, followed by subsequent training in the reserve.

4. The correct period of training is that which will produce a soldier fit to take the field against foreign troops.

5. The dominating factor in fixing the term of service ought not to be the convenience of the individual soldier, but the need for success in war.

6. The trade of war must be learnt like any other trade: the length of the apprenticeship must be decided by the "faculty," and not by the "apprentice."

7. The arguments used to discredit the selected period of two years' training are not supported by adequate reasons drawn from knowledge or experience, and are not entitled to any weight.

8. The introduction of two years' service involves no revolution in the organisation of the Army.

9. A man may be taught to drill in six months, but having been taught, is not necessarily a soldier.

10. In the opinion of most soldiers of experience six months' training is inadequate.

11. Two years' period of colour service, in preference to one, for short-service men was introduced in deference to military opinion.

CHAPTER XII

THE RESERVE AND SHORT SERVICE

THE CARDWELL SYSTEM.

It is a matter of common agreement that, in view of the conditions under which modern war is conducted, the British Army has not sufficient power of expansion ; in other words it has not a sufficient Reserve.

The introduction of the Cardwell system was the first serious attempt to supply this want. As is well known, the original term of enlistment under that system was six years with the colours and six years in the First-Class Army Reserve. At a later date seven years' colour service became the rule, while, for the most part, men serving in India were compelled to prolong their colour service to eight years. These departures from the original plan naturally tended to deplete a Reserve which was never really adequate, and the need for an increase had become so apparent that in 1898 Lord Lansdowne initiated the experiment of enlisting a certain number of men for three years' colour service. These men formed a part of the ordinary infantry battalions, and a considerable number were actually serving in the ranks when the South African War broke out. None, however, had then actually passed into the Reserve.

There are reasons which make this plan of mixed enlistment and mixed service undesirable in the

case of battalions liable to foreign service. Lord Lansdowne's policy was, however, the correct expression of a need, though it may not have provided for its fulfilment.

THE RESERVE IN 1899.

It is impossible that an adequate Reserve should ever be produced under a system of seven years' enlistment. How inadequate it must be is proved by the fact that during the South African War practically the whole of the Line Infantry reserve was exhausted, and that some battalions actually left the country short of men because their total available reserve was not strong enough to fill up the cadres to war strength. The ample reserve of the brigade of Guards—in which short service had for some time past prevailed—afforded complete testimony to the ease with which a second line can be formed by the adoption of such a system.

That the Army Reserve ought to be greatly increased is obvious; but the exact amount of the increase, and the source from which the reservists should be drawn, are subjects of controversy. The actual numbers must of course depend upon the policy of the Executive Government for the time being. For instance, if the contingency of war in India against a European enemy, or of war in Europe as a principal or ally be contemplated, the Reserve must be on a very large scale. If, on the other hand, the policy of the nation absolutely excludes the idea of war on a large scale, either in the East or nearer home; and if it also excludes all question of a serious invasion of the United Kingdom, then, obviously, the need for a large Reserve vanishes.

It is probably not too much to say, however, that public opinion, generally, is in favour of a great

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addition to the numbers of the Reserve available for war, and not only would welcome, but distinctly expects a change destined to give us that addition.

THE RESERVE PROPOSALS OF 1904.

It has been made a ground of objection to the proposals put forward in 1904 that, if adopted, they would have produced a very inadequate Reserve. This criticism, however, is not sustainable, and is the outcome of a want of acquaintance with the scheme. In the statement presented to Parliament the total Infantry reserve was given as 89,800. But it cannot be too clearly understood that this figure was a "manufactured" figure; in other words, that the system had been adapted so as to produce the exact number of men which were considered at that time to be requisite. In order to produce this output it was necessary to limit the reserve-producing power of the machine and to slow down its working. The term for Long-Service reservists was cut down to three years, and for Short-Service men to six, reducing the total service in the latter case from twelve years to eight.¹

The Second-Class Reserve was abandoned both for Long and Short-Service men.

It soon became evident, however, that in the opinion of the Committee of Imperial Defence, and, indeed, of the public generally, this output, though in excess of anything previously attained, could not be regarded as adequate in view of the danger to which the country might be exposed. It was therefore necessary to point out what the system would produce if run at its maximum, instead of its minimum, power. The fact that these particulars were frequently given had, how-

| | Colours. | Reserve. | Total. |
|--|----------|----------|--------|
| ¹ Long Service, 7 years' enlistment . . | 7 to 8 | 5 to 4 | 12 |
| | years. | years. | |
| Short Service, 2 years' enlistment . . | 2 years. | 6 years. | 8 |

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ever, no effect in modifying the criticism of those who condemned the Reserve on the ground of its inadequacy. It is necessary, therefore, to state the facts here with perfect clearness.

Actuarial calculation shows that, on the assumption that the Long-Service Infantry are enlisted for nine years with the colours and three years in the Reserve, the Short-Service Infantry for two years with the colours and ten years in the Reserve, followed in both cases by optional enlistment in section "D," as at present, the Reserve of the Infantry alone will amount to no less than 140,000 men. This includes the Reserve of the Brigade of Guards. The substitution of seven for nine years would, obviously, increase the total.

In addition to this very large total there would also be such Militia as were not utilised for the formation of the Territorial Army.

THE POWER OF EXPANSION AFFORDED BY SHORT SERVICE.

It is worth noting that if the term of colour service of the Short-Service infantry were reduced from two years to one, a course which has had many advocates, the Infantry reserve would attain the high total of 240,000, giving an Infantry force available in time of war of no less than 433,000 men.

It is obvious, therefore, that the scheme, if carried out to its reasonable and legitimate conclusion, might be made to furnish by far the largest trained Infantry force this country has ever possessed. It may be that even this total is considered inadequate by some, but the numbers are so largely in excess of anything that has yet been contemplated, far less achieved, that to condemn the scheme on the ground of its failure to produce a Reserve savours more of prejudice than of the spirit of sane criticism.

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THE ARTILLERY RESERVES.

It must not be forgotten that we have thus far dealt only with the Reserve of the Infantry. To the totals given above must be added in every case the reserves of the other arms. Of these the most important is that of the Artillery. No arm requires so large an addition or multiplication as the Artillery.¹

This can be easily understood when we recall the peculiar circumstances under which the Artillery take the field. It is necessary to provide ammunition trains on an ample scale, far in excess of what it is possible or reasonable to maintain in time of peace. It is also necessary to create the field parks. It is probably not an exaggeration to say that, on mobilisation, the Artillery require three men to be added for every one actually serving. It is obvious, therefore, that the creation of a large reserve for the Royal Artillery would under any circumstances be an important matter. Under the peculiar conditions of our Army the matter is exceptionally important, and exceptionally difficult.

It is not generally realised that during the last ten years the Royal Horse and Field Artillery have practically been doubled. In 1894 there were 20 Batteries of Horse and 80 of Field Artillery; the corresponding figures for 1904 were 28 and 150.

It is obvious that considerable efforts were necessary to raise this large number of men by voluntary enlistment in so short a time. It is equally apparent that many of the batteries having only recently been formed, and many of them having been for a considerable time under strength, the creation of a reserve has not kept pace with

¹ With the possible exception of the Royal Army Medical Corps. But the need for a great addition in the case of this corps is due to its weakness under peace conditions, and is not inherent, as it practically is in the case of the Artillery.

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the increase of the personnel of the Artillery as a whole. There is, in fact, a serious shortage in the Reserve of the Royal Artillery, and although as the years pass and the exodus of men from the batteries continues, the normal calculated reserve will ultimately be realised, time must elapse before this result is attained, and even when it is attained the Reserve, for the reasons detailed above, will be insufficient to supply all the requirements of war. It was therefore necessary to treat the Artillery with special consideration.

For reasons that have already been referred to it was thought necessary to recruit the whole of the Infantry of the Line, for a time at any rate, on a nine-years' colour engagement. But such a course was not possible in the case of the Artillery. In view of the serious shortage of Reservists it was considered absolutely necessary to allow the Horse and Field Artillery to continue for a time to take recruits for a three-years' term of colour service. To have substituted the nine-years' term would have been to arrest the formation of the Reserve which was, and is, so important to the welfare of this arm.

LONG AND SHORT SERVICE FOR THE ARTILLERY.

It must not be supposed, however, that the same considerations which led to the introduction of a long-service term for the Infantry and for the Garrison Artillery—considerations arising out of the difficulty of finding the Indian drafts—do not affect the Horse and Field Artillery. The difficulty of finding drafts in these branches is less than in the Infantry, both because the proportion of men abroad to those at home is smaller in the former than in the latter, and because the rate of extension of service has hitherto been somewhat higher in the Artillery than in the Infantry. But there is a difficulty, and it is not diminishing. It is indeed not

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improbable that before long the term of enlistment in the Horse and Field Artillery, or for some portion of it, may have to be extended to seven or nine years. But the longer this change can be put off the better.¹

It must be clearly understood, however, that even if the short-service enlistment be continued, the full Reserve of the Artillery will not be created. To obtain it, special measures are necessary. There are various sources from which the shortage may possibly be made up. The first and most obvious is the Militia Garrison Artillery. This force in 1905 numbered 14,909, and was declining. The decline is not remarkable, nor, in a sense, is it to be regretted. For the work for which they were originally raised the Militia Artillery are, in the strictest sense, redundant. There are not enough guns for them to work, or enough fortifications for them to man. Unless some use can be found for officers and men, many of these units ought not to exist. But the shortage of the Royal Horse and Field Artillery Reserves seems to suggest a use for the superfluous Militia Artillery. There seems no reason why officers and men should not be specifically asked to undertake the duties required for the service of ammunition columns and field parks. For the performance of these duties they can, by a judicious alteration of existing regulations, receive proper training during the winter months; and many soldiers are of opinion that with such training they would be of great value in the event of war. Whether officers and men will willingly accept the new duties remains to be seen. The probability is that some of them may do so, but it would be idle to expect a general transfer of the whole Force. It is evident that, as a condition precedent to their employment on such

¹ The term of Colour Service for Horse and Field Artillery was extended to six years in 1906

responsible work, they must undertake to serve abroad in time of war.

But the whole question of the utilisation of the Artillery of the Auxiliary Forces is of such interest and importance that it deserves to be dealt with in a separate chapter. The rôle which has just been suggested for certain portions of the Artillery Militia is not that for which officers and men originally offered their services; and it is, perhaps, unreasonable to expect that many of them now serving will be willing to undertake duties which, though important and valuable, are in their essence subsidiary.

RESERVES FOR OTHER BRANCHES OF THE ARMY.

Of the Reserve for the technical and special branches of the Army, something must be said. There can be little doubt that the example first set in connection with the Post Office Corps is one which may be followed and extended with advantage. The law permits of the transfer of men to the Reserve after a merely nominal period of colour service, and this plan has great and obvious advantages in those cases in which the services the man is required to perform in war are identical with those which he is in the habit of performing in time of peace. Telegraphists, motorists, transport drivers, and, above all, medical officers, bearers and hospital attendants, come within this category. Space does not allow of an enumeration of all that has already been done to supplement the technical branches of the Army from civil sources. But much has been done, and much more remains to be done.

The Royal Army Medical Corps in particular is still greatly in need of strengthening. The beneficent changes in the Corps effected by Mr. Brodrick have made the road of progress easy. There

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is good guidance, a good system, and a growing recognition of the supreme importance of a sound medical and hygienic organisation.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XII.

1. The existence of a large Reserve is essential to the Army.
2. The size of the Reserve is indirectly dependent upon the length of colour service.
3. The Reserve in 1900 was inadequate in numbers.
4. The proposals of 1904, if carried out, would have provided an Infantry Reserve of from 140,000 to 240,000 men.
5. The Artillery requires a larger proportionate Reserve than any other arm.
6. The Militia Artillery might with advantage contribute to the Reserve of the Regular Army.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PROVISION OF A STRIKING FORCE

WHAT A "STRIKING FORCE" IS.

No portion of the mandate which confronted the Secretary of State in 1903 was more definite and more peremptory than that which enjoined the creation of a Striking Force. That mandate has not yet been carried into effect, nor can it be until the principle of a change in the organisation of the Regular Army is frankly admitted to be necessary, and until effect has been given to that principle.

The meaning of the term "Striking Force," the need for the creation of such a force, and the reasons which, at present, interfere with its creation, require explanation.

By a "Striking Force" is meant a force of all arms mobilised, or partially mobilised, in peace time, and capable of being utilised at very short notice in any part of the world. It is not essential, though it is desirable, that such a force should be concentrated in peace time. The essential point is that it should be ready to move on receipt of marching orders.¹

¹ It may be objected that short notice is not essential in the case of a British force, because any troops likely to be needed in a hurry must be moved over-sea, and time will be required for the preparation of transports. No doubt some time will usually be available; but it is scarcely safe to assume that there will be no exceptions to the rule. In

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THERE IS NO STRIKING FORCE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

That no such force exists in the United Kingdom is a matter of common knowledge. It is a necessary outcome of our military system that not a single unit at home can be safely sent to the front until it has been mobilised ; in other words, until the unfit men have been eliminated and their places taken by reservists, and until the strength of the unit has been raised to war establishment by additions drawn from the same source. There is nothing remarkable about this arrangement ; it is common to all modern armies. But even among modern European armies in which mobilisation is conducted on an immense scale, and in which the field army embraces hundreds of thousands of men recalled from civil life, there are exceptions to the rule. Both Germany and France keep a large force, of which the units are at war strength, on their western and eastern frontiers respectively ; and in Austria-Hungary there are many Cavalry regiments which are ready to march on the bugle-call. The maintenance of these bodies of specially mobilised men is a precaution taken by foreign nations to guard against surprise, and to give time to mobilise the rest of the national army in rear of the frontier in the event of a sudden act of hostility on the part of a neighbouring Power.

Our frontier is our coast, and for that reason a large part of the British Fleet is always mobilised, and is always within reach of our own shores or

the first place, transport may easily be provided during a period of strained relations, and its provision may excite no suspicion and arouse no comment, whereas mobilisation might be regarded as an act of war, or might precipitate the very calamity which it was hoped to avert. Again, it is not safe to assume as an absolutely incontrovertible proposition that no troops will ever be required at short notice for the defence of this country, or for action within a few miles of its shores. In the last-named event ocean transport in the ordinary sense might not be necessary.

those of a possible enemy. But while we are practically free from the precise military dangers which threaten some other countries, we have special dangers of our own to which they are not exposed.

AN OBJECT-LESSON FROM NATAL.

A remarkable object-lesson on this point was furnished by the events which marked the early days of the South African War. For many weeks before the Boers invaded British territory, the possibility, if not the probability of war was manifest to every one in this country. It was known, too, that if war did break out, our force in South Africa, and especially in Natal, was insufficient to maintain itself against a resolute enemy. It has never been the practice of this country to make any reasonable preparation in advance for a war, however certain; and precedent was followed with great fidelity in 1899.

At least three weeks were required to reinforce the garrison of Natal from home; and on the home establishment there was not a single battery, regiment, or battalion fit to take the field without mobilisation. Political considerations, which, in this country, are always allowed to paralyse military action, no matter what price may ultimately have to be paid for the interference, forbade mobilisation in advance. What was to be done? Was Natal to be sacrificed? It seemed as if that were the only answer which could be given. Indeed, as far as any help from the United Kingdom was concerned, Natal was sacrificed.

The decision to reinforce the British troops in Natal was arrived at by the Cabinet on the 8th September. More than a month later (October 12th) the first shot was fired; but not till six weeks after the decision to reinforce did units from home begin to leave the country, and these troops had

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to travel more than 7,000 miles before they could affect the situation at the front.

At this crisis the whole force available at home was dispatched. It consisted of two battalions of Infantry and a brigade division (three batteries) of Field Artillery. Not one of these units was the ordinary product of the system. An accident alone permitted the dispatch of a battalion of the Northumberland Fusiliers. This battalion did not belong to the Home establishment. It had been stationed in Crete, and was under orders for the West Indies. It had been detained *en route* at Aldershot, the men were still wearing their khaki uniforms, and the battalion was about to cross the Atlantic. It was dispatched to Natal. Another battalion, the 2nd Munster Fusiliers, was quartered at Fermoy. It was weak in numbers, unmobilised, and therefore not fit to take the field. It was nevertheless ordered to South Africa, and on arrival was stationed temporarily in the Cape Colony. It was wisely not sent to Natal. It was not ready to go there; and did not become so until some time after its arrival.

It is hardly necessary to say that no such thing as a brigade division of Artillery fit to take the field existed in the United Kingdom. In order to obtain the three batteries required, the detestable practice of drafting from other batteries was resorted to, and not less than a dozen batteries were put under contribution.¹

Such was the effective output of the Home establishment in a time of crisis when the fate of a Colony, and indeed of South Africa, was hanging in the balance.

¹ It must be stated in justice to the War Office that the necessity of strengthening the South African garrison had been recognised for some time, and that the process of collecting odds and ends had been going on for some months prior to the dispatch of the brigade division.

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Out of the 108,000 men at that time quartered in the United Kingdom, this handful¹ was all that was available.

How, then, was Natal saved? The answer is well known. What the United Kingdom could not do, India could and did do. Within nine days of receiving the order, the Indian Government had commenced the embarkation of troops at Bombay; and by the 7th of October the greater part of the Indian Contingent had landed at Durban. The situation was relieved, the Colony at any rate was saved; but it was saved despite, and not because of our military system.

And yet it was perfectly possible to foresee that such a contingency as that which called for the instant dispatch of reinforcements in 1899 might occur, nay, almost certainly would occur, in some part of our Empire. The fact that in the case of all British military expeditions the period occupied by the sea journey has to be added to the time necessary for mobilisation was as obvious in 1899 as it is now. So also was the fact that the great and proper reluctance to mobilise the whole Army, which always exists in this country must inevitably delay the preparation of troops to the latest possible moment. It is one of the elementary lessons of war that to strike hard and to strike at once is, in nine cases out of ten, the first duty of a commander, and the most certain and often the only way of avoiding defeat; yet to provide for this ordinary contingency of war we had made no provision whatever in 1899, and we have made none to this day.

THE STRIKING FORCE PROPOSED IN 1904.

It was to guard against the recurrence of a danger such as that which threatened us in the

¹ And some small details of R.E. and A.S.C.

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autumn of 1899, that the Secretary of State embodied in the scheme submitted to Parliament in 1904 proposals for the formation of a striking force.

This force was to be composed of twelve battalions of Infantry, maintained at an establishment of 900 and upwards, with a corresponding proportion of all other arms in an equal state of preparation. It was proposed that these troops should form part of the Aldershot Army Corps. Details of cost were supplied to Parliament at the time.

It must be clearly understood that there is nothing essential either in the number or the composition of the force which it was proposed to establish. By some the total was criticised as being insufficient, and it was suggested that an entire Army Corps should be maintained on a war footing.

It would, of course, be possible, and if it were absolutely necessary it would be desirable, to keep 35,000 men on a war footing at home. But nothing short of a clearly demonstrated necessity would justify such an effort. The cost of maintaining such an Army Corps would be very high; and it must be remembered that if 35,000 men of full age are to be kept permanently at Aldershot or elsewhere, a great addition must be made to the numbers of the Army. The mobilised units must of necessity absorb large numbers of men who in the ordinary course would proceed to India as drafts; and this would involve the enlistment and maintenance of additional long-service men for India. The number of units at home must be increased, the number of men in the depots must be increased, and above all, a larger number of long-service men of full age must be maintained with the colours than are required under existing conditions, or than would be required for a moderate-sized striking force.

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THE ALDERSHOT ARMY CORPS.

To some military observers it has seemed that there were serious objections to a plan which involved the inclusion in the Aldershot Army Corps of two classes of troops, Long- and Short-Service respectively. The answer to such a criticism has already been given. The question is one of necessity in the first instance, and of cost in the second. If it were proved to be essential to maintain more than twelve battalions on a war footing, and if the nation were prepared to pay the cost, the additional battalions might no doubt be quartered at Aldershot with advantage. Apart, however, from this counsel of perfection, the criticism referred to is entitled to little weight. At the present time not a single battalion at Aldershot is fit for war. It is scarcely reasonable, therefore, to complain of an arrangement which for the first time for years would give us a division and a brigade ready to take the field.

Again, it has been objected that the Short-Service battalions in the command would be the source of serious difficulties. Their maintenance at Aldershot would, it is pointed out, be inconsistent with the scheme of territorial quarterings, and, moreover, the presence of so many young soldiers would interfere with the efficiency of the force as a whole. There is, however, no ground for apprehension on either of these heads. So far from the quartering of Short-Service battalions in a great training centre being inconsistent with the proposals made in 1904, it is, in fact, an integral part of those proposals. It is most desirable that, at regular intervals, every Short-Service battalion should pass one or two years in a great centre such as Aldershot. Even if such a plan were not in itself ideal, the existence of the ample barrack accommodation provided for the Aldershot Army Corps would render it desirable.

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It would be false economy to allow Infantry barracks to remain untenanted, especially if by so doing it became necessary to construct an equal number elsewhere. But nothing could be better for the Short-Service battalions than to form for a time part of a large, well-organised body of troops such as that which is quartered in and around Aldershot. The question of the youth of the men need not be seriously considered. Under the existing system there are, at any given time, far more young men in the Aldershot Army Corps who are disqualified for foreign service than would be contained in the Short-Service battalions. The need for the elimination of these men now renders the whole of the 24 battalions in the Command unfit to take the field without mobilisation. Under the proposed system 12 battalions would be ready at all times, while 12 battalions would be in the position now occupied by the whole force, and would be able to go abroad only after they had discarded their ineffectives, and received their reservists.

THE MOBILISATION OF A STRIKING FORCE.

One more point remains to be noticed in this connection. The true function of a striking force is not always understood. The view is entertained in some quarters that, in the event of war, the striking force should necessarily and naturally be the first to go. Such an opinion requires examination. There are cases in which the striking force should, without doubt, be the first portion of the Army to move. It is not difficult to picture the conditions under which such a movement would be reasonable. For small expeditions in which it is not anticipated that a large force will ultimately be engaged, such a force can with great advantage be employed. It can commence and can complete operations without going through the process

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of mobilisation—a serious matter at all times, and perhaps never more serious than when partial.

Again, in such a case as that which arose in South Africa in 1899, a striking force is invaluable. Time is of the essence. It is absolutely necessary to effect a lodgment, to relieve a post, to occupy a strategic position in anticipation of the enemy. The ground having been secured, the crisis averted, the country can afford to wait. Mobilisation can take place, plans can be matured, transport on a large scale can be collected. In 1899 the striking force was provided by India, and we have seen how great was its value. But the time may come when India will be unable to do our work for us.

There is a third case in which the use of the striking force at the commencement of hostilities will clearly not be desirable—namely, in the event of complications in India. The Army in India will require drafts and reinforcements. Drafts will proceed to their own units; reinforcements will be added to existing divisions and brigades whose organisations are already formed, and whose commanders are acquainted with the problems of Indian warfare. It is obvious that under such conditions nothing would be gained and much would be lost by dispatching to Bombay the one complete and properly organised force in the United Kingdom. Our success in the campaign, and our immunity from difficulties elsewhere than in India, must be definitely established before the United Kingdom can safely be denuded of Regular troops. And if any Regular troops are to be retained, it is obvious, under such circumstances, that an organised body such as the Aldershot Army Corps would be of more value here, and perhaps of less value in India, than a larger number of separate units. It is difficult to exaggerate the additional strength which a force acquires from regular training as a united whole under its own commander. To break

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up such a force and to use its constituent elements as reinforcements is to undo the work of many months, and to sacrifice a power which has only been created by infinite pains and practice. Therefore, if the Striking Force is to be regarded as forming part of the Aldershot Army Corps, it should be used in such a way as to permit of its organisation remaining intact.¹

ALTERNATIVES.—THE NAVAL METHOD.

Such are the proposals which were made for the creation of a Striking Force, and the reasons which led to such proposals. It may be suggested that, though it is desirable to have a force available for instant action without mobilisation, there are other and better methods of obtaining it than keeping units on a war footing in time of peace. It is worth while, therefore, to examine briefly the alternatives which present themselves.

In the Navy the difficulty is easily met. The nucleus crews on board the ships at Portsmouth, Plymouth, and Chatham are always ready for action. No man need be discharged from the ship when her sailing orders arrive. The deficiency is in quantity, not in quality, and the deficiency can be remedied instantly. The Service is one, the naval barracks are at hand, and in two hours enough men can be marched on board from the barracks to supply every rating, and to enable the ship to go into action with her full fighting complement.

No analogous process can be resorted to in the case of the Army. No common reservoir of officers or men is available. Every regiment of Cavalry, every battalion of Infantry must be supplied from its own reserves, or not at all. The law forbids the

¹ It is not essential that the Striking Force should be identical in whole or in part with the Aldershot Army Corps; but there are very strong practical reasons why such an arrangement should be adopted.

transfer of men from one corps to another; and indeed, even if such a transfer were not illegal, it would be, under existing conditions, most undesirable.¹

It being apparent, then, that the naval practice cannot be followed,² is there any other substitute for the method of creating a striking force which has been suggested in this chapter?

The answer is that there are two, and that they are both equally to be deprecated.

The first is the old method which has been tried with such lamentable results on various occasions: the plan, namely, of obtaining drafts by volunteering from units other than those placed under orders for the front. It is hardly necessary to discuss this plan, which stands condemned by experience, and by its own inherent and apparent defects.

The plan violates every canon of military efficiency. Men who have been trained under the strict regimental system are suddenly transferred to another regiment with which they have no connection, and in which they take no interest. The unit from which the volunteers are taken is usually a weak one. If it were a strong one it would as a rule be selected for service. The draft leaves it

¹ By an Act of 1906 a considerable and important step has been taken in the direction of permitting transfers in the Reserve. The Act provides that reservists may be utilised to strengthen corps other than those from which they were discharged. The reason is that in practice it was found that the reservists of some corps were in excess of requirements, while in others they were insufficient to supply the needs of war. It was impossible under the old system to transfer men who had entered the Reserve from one branch of the service to another, or even from one corps to another. Thus, for instance, a Cavalry reservist could not legally be transferred to the mounted branch of the Transport, nor a reservist of the North Staffordshire to the South Staffordshire. The Act, of course, applies only to those enlisting subsequent to its passage.

² The actual striking force of the Navy is of course the Fleet in full commission; but reference has been made to the plan of increasing the striking force by filling up the ships in commission in reserve, in order to illustrate the Army problem.

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weaker than ever. It is not only weaker but it is worse, for, unless the commanding officer has the good luck to foist his "hard bargains" upon the fighting battalion, he will lose those who go of their own will, in other words the fittest and most enterprising. And if the ordinary process of volunteering does not suffice to weed out the best men, the rules of the Service will. The volunteers will be taken exclusively from that small number of men who are effective in respect of age and service, and everything the outgoing battalion gains the battalion left behind will lose, and lose to its disadvantage. When in its turn it is required for war, it must mobilise, and nothing but the skeleton of the battalion will be available. The plan of creating a striking force by utilising drafts obtained by volunteering may, therefore, be dismissed.

DRAFTING AND THE "SIXPENNY RESERVISTS."

One other alternative remains to be considered. It is certainly no better, and in some respects is probably worse, than that which has just been condemned. This is the utilisation of what is officially known as the "A" Section of the Reserve, but has been somewhat less reverently spoken of as "The Sixpenny Reserve."

The "Sixpenny Reserve" is composed of men who on passing into the First-Class Army Reserve undertake, in consideration of sixpence a day in addition to their ordinary reserve pay, to hold themselves in readiness at a moment's notice for active service with any unit of that branch of the Army to which they belong.

During the South African War the whole of the "Sixpenny Reservists" were called out, but not in fulfilment of their original purpose. In 1899 the whole Army was mobilised, and there was obviously

no use for the men of the "A" Section, save as ordinary reservists of the regiments to which they belonged. As such they were called out, and as such they were utilised.¹

The purpose for which these men are maintained is, however, a different one. They are intended to form a special Reserve for any force which has to be mobilised with great speed; and also to enable a small number of units to be brought up to war strength without recourse to general mobilisation. That such men can be utilised for such a purpose is indisputable. Whether they can be so used with any advantage to the Service is very doubtful.

It must be remembered that these men will, in all probability, represent the least desirable class of soldier. It is often said, and said truly, that the Reserve liability is a disadvantage to a man seeking work. It is not unnatural that this should be the case. In the absence of universal service, the employer of a reservist undertakes a burden which is not imposed on other employers. The highest praise is due to the great majority of those employers whose men were recalled to the colours in 1899. The public demanded much from them, and they responded with great patriotism and liberality. The public applauded their generosity, but made no effort to share their burden. If Reserve liability was a disadvantage to a man seeking employment before the war, it is not likely to be less of a disadvantage now.

A general mobilisation is, happily, rare. An employer may justly feel that he runs only a slight risk in employing an ordinary reservist. But a man in Section A is in a very different position from that of an ordinary reservist. He is liable to go at twenty-four hours' notice, and there is not only a chance, there is the strongest probability that

¹ In October, 1905, the strength of Section A was 4,133, of whom 3,261 were Infantry.

he will be called out to take part in one of those minor expeditions from which this country is seldom free for any long period. The man who voluntarily places himself in so precarious a position is not likely to obtain steady and permanent employment. He will tend in the direction of the unemployed.¹

The position of the reservist of Section A will always be uncertain and undesirable.

But this does not exhaust the disadvantages of the system. As long as the regimental system lasts in its present rigid form, it is a power which must be reckoned with for good and for evil. Under the present Reserve system it will not be the exception, but the rule, that the reservist in Section A will return to a unit which is not his own; with which he has never served and with whose officers and men he is unacquainted. His first acquaintance with his officers will, in all probability, be effected on the transport. The objection is not a fatal one, for the men will doubtless soon pick up the feeling of the unit to which they are attached, but the arrangement will not be popular.

Lastly, when we come to compare the efficiency for war produced by the system we are now discussing, with that produced by the arrangement described earlier in the chapter, the inferiority of the "Sixpenny Reserve" plan will become very apparent.

A striking force mobilised in time of peace, and forming part of the First Army Corps, will probably be as efficient a military unit as this country can ever produce under our existing military system. The general officer commanding will have infused

¹ Unless and until some arrangement is made by which he can obtain regimental employment, a plan which has very much to recommend it, and which would probably have been carried into effect long ago if funds had been available.

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his spirit into every man in the force ; officers and men will have been trained to work together ; everything will have been tried in peace time and will, therefore, be available and effective in time of war. But if we were to take the Aldershot Army Corps as it exists at this moment, and proceed to mobilise it by discarding one-half of the rank and file and filling up the battalions with some 500 reservists each—reservists taken not from the regiments to which the reinforced battalions belong, but indiscriminately from the whole of the Army—there can be no doubt as to what the verdict of the general officer would be on a process which would destroy in a day the work of three years' effort and organisation. In a word the "utilisation" of the "A" Section for the purpose of mobilising a striking force is possible, but it is on every ground most undesirable, and greatly to be deprecated.

If we are in earnest in our desire to possess an efficient striking force we must do what other nations do, and what our own Navy does : we must maintain a portion of our Army on a true war footing in time of peace. The size of the force must be determined by the need, and by the cost. It is greatly to be desired that the plan formed in 1904 should be proceeded with. The number of long-service men in the Army now permits of the creation of a striking force on the lines proposed ; and any reduction of the number of men with the colours in time of peace only increases the need for such a force.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XIII.

1. The formation of a "Striking Force" was part of the duty of the Secretary of State for War in 1904.

2. A striking force is a force of all arms mobilised in time of peace, or capable of being mobilised immediately, without calling out the whole of the Army Reserve.

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3. There is no striking force in the country at present.
4. The events which took place in Natal in 1900 furnish an example of the need for a striking force.
5. The striking force from India saved Natal.
6. The formation of a striking force formed part of the proposals of 1904.
7. The striking force is not necessarily the first portion of the Army to be utilised in the event of a serious war.
8. The existence of Section A of the Army Reserve is not an adequate substitute for a striking force.

CHAPTER XIV

THE GUARDS, THE CAVALRY, AND THE YEOMANRY

THE GUARDS.

THE BRIGADE OF GUARDS AND SHORT SERVICE.

At the present time (October, 1906), the Brigade of Guards is the only portion of the Army which is recruited on a Short-Service term of enlistment. The term of service is three years with the colours, with the power of extension to eight. As the Guards perform no foreign service in time of peace,¹ it is possible to apply the Short-Service system to them, and with the greatest possible advantage. Although, as stated, the regiments of the Brigade of Guards are now the only ones serving on a short term, it was an essential feature of the proposals of 1904 that a number of battalions of the Line should also be composed in the main of short-service men, and should, like the Guards, serve at home in time of peace.

THE GUARDS AND THE PROPOSALS OF 1904.

It was intended that the Short-Service term as applied to these battalions should be two years with the colours, as against three years in the case of the Guards. This difference in the period

¹ A battalion of the Guards, the 3rd Coldstream, has recently [1906] been dispatched to Egypt, the linked-battalion system having once more broken down.

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of colour service necessitated a corresponding difference in the matter of pay. At present the Guardsman receives a penny a day more than the Linesman, and, moreover, enjoys the advantage of a choice between Short Service or Long Service on extension. It was obvious that if the same, or even greater advantages, were offered to the Line battalions, the Guards would inevitably suffer in the competition thus established. It was, therefore, proposed that the rate of pay for privates of the Guards who had not extended their colour service should be 1s. 3d. a day, thus maintaining the slight advantage over the Line which they at present possess, and which it was intended they should continue to enjoy. There can be no doubt that this policy was sound, and that it must be adopted as soon as Short-Service enlistment for the Line, or any portion of it, is resumed.¹

THE DEFICIENCY OF OFFICERS AND MEN IN 1905.

The history of the Brigade from 1903 to 1905 was marked by features of special interest. At the close of the South African War a number of officers had resigned their commissions. Other causes which need not be discussed here had tended still further to reduce the commissioned ranks. The competition of the three years' enlistment for the Line had also adversely affected the recruiting of the rank and file. The duties of the Guards are exceedingly onerous, and there can be no doubt that many recruits, finding that Short Service was open to them in the Line, chose that branch of the service in preference to one in which ceremonial parades, guards, and sentry-go were known to be exceptionally heavy. So serious

¹ Short-Service enlistment for certain battalions of the Line was opened in 1905 (see p. 137), but was put a stop to in 1906 without any reason being assigned.

was the shortage both of officers and men that the continuance of the Brigade on its full ten-battalion establishment seemed to be imperilled. The shortage of officers was specially serious, for the malady was progressive. Every fresh resignation added to the duties of those officers who remained; their work became more onerous than before, and thus still further resignations were sent in by those on whom the extra calls were made. The same process was repeated in a somewhat different form in the case of the rank and file. As the strength of the battalions diminished the duties of those who remained in the ranks increased, and no doubt the popularity of the service was thereby diminished.

“MENDING OR ENDING.”

Some action was inevitable. The commanding officers of the Guards regiments were called into consultation, and the whole question was made the subject of very careful examination. The proposal to reduce the battalions found some advocates. It was urged with some force that it was better that two units should be disbanded, rather than that the Brigade, as a whole, should be exposed to the danger of disintegration and decay. On the other hand, it was pointed out that the Brigade of Guards was an Infantry force of particular excellence, which had never been found wanting in peace or war; that the two battalions which it was proposed to destroy had been raised in response to a direct and urgent appeal made to the officers of the regiments to which the battalions belonged. It was contended that nothing could be more discouraging to hard-working and zealous officers than to see the results of their labours ignored, and the work they had completed with so much effort, broken

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and destroyed just as its success had become assured. It was represented that the destruction of two battalions would mean putting an end to the Guards Brigade at Aldershot, one of the most homogeneous and best-trained brigades in the Army. Lastly, it was pointed out that the difficulty which had arisen was due to temporary and specific causes; that there was no reason to believe that these causes would always be operative; and that time and judicious management would suffice to restore the Brigade to its pristine efficiency.

THE DECISION TO "MEND."

These counsels prevailed. It was decided to mend, and not to end. The introduction of Long-Service enlistment for the Line eased the situation with respect to the rank and file of the Guards. The battalions were brought up to their respective establishments. Special arrangements were made for filling the commissioned ranks, and a number of probationers recommended by the colonels of the regiments, and approved by the Secretary of State, were attached to the battalions. Not only was the deficit made good, but it was found necessary to institute a "waiting list" of candidates for whom there was not room in the regiments.¹

THE CAVALRY.

THE RECENT HISTORY OF THE CAVALRY.

"Happy is the country which has no history." The history of the Cavalry since 1903 has been one of steady and satisfactory progress. The

¹ The Army Council has recently (July, 1906) reversed the decision arrived at in 1904-5. The 3rd Battalion Coldstream Guards and the 3rd Battalion Scots Guards are to be destroyed, the first-named having, however, temporary respite (see p. 117).

organisation of our small Cavalry force differs fundamentally from that of the Infantry in that each regiment of Cavalry being composed of a single unit, the linking system, which is the basis of the present Infantry organisation, cannot be applied to it. The Cavalry system has much to commend it. Unfortunately those who have been most resolute in maintaining the individuality of the regiments have not had the courage to carry out their principles to their natural conclusion. In the Cavalry, as in the Infantry, there are many soldiers who are under twenty years of age, and are therefore disqualified for service in India. A cavalryman enlisted at eighteen must remain at home till he is twenty. If, during that time, his regiment is ordered abroad, he is left without any natural point of attachment. The regiment has no second battalion, and no regimental depot.

THE DRAFTING DIFFICULTY IN THE CAVALRY.

To meet this situation various expedients have been tried. At one time a depot for Cavalry regiments in India existed at Canterbury. It was rightly done away with. It failed, not because it was a depot, but because it was an ill-managed depot, and organised on a faulty principle. An attempt was then made to provide for the case of the young soldier by dividing the Cavalry into three Corps, composed of Lancers, Dragoons, and Hussars respectively, and recruits were enlisted for the Corps and not for the regiment. The plan was tried half-heartedly, and was never popular. There is even some doubt as to whether it was legal; it was certainly directly opposed to the spirit, if not to the letter of the law. But whatever the merits of the plan—and it has merits—they were obscured by the manner in which the system

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was worked. Our Cavalry regiments are small, too small for economical or efficient working, and it is quite conceivable that, from a military point of view, it might have been advisable to form three real Corps within each of which officers and men would have been freely interchangeable, and the regiments composing which would have worn a similar, if not an identical uniform. Such a plan has been adopted, and with success, in France. Whether it could be introduced into the British Army is doubtful, in view of the strong regimental feeling which exists, and of the extent to which social considerations dominate purely military considerations. But be this as it may, no attempt was ever made to work the Corps system logically and completely. Every regiment in a Corps retained its distinctive uniform, and everything was done to preserve the individuality of each regiment.

It was, however, absolutely necessary to adopt some expedient in order to make the machine work at all. The plan of grouping the regiments in pairs was tried. This was in fact an imitation of the linked-battalion system with all its vices, and with the added disadvantage arising from the absence of any community of interest or association between the linked regiments. The plan, moreover, was liable, as in the linked-battalion system in the Infantry, to be upset by every disturbance of the equilibrium between regiments at home and abroad.

The grouping of the regiments in threes was only another expedient invented to suit the circumstances of the moment, and based on no intelligible principle

THE CAVALRY ORGANISATION OF 1904-5.

In the autumn of 1903 it was decided to discontinue the practice of linking for the supply of drafts; and the question of how to provide a

substitute not open to the objections which have been referred to above was brought up for consideration. It was suggested that the difficulty might be got over by the establishment of large depots for the whole of the Cavalry ; these depots to receive and to train recruits, and to forward them direct to their regiments, whether at home or abroad. In order to meet the difficulty which had hitherto arisen in connection with men whose regiments were serving in India, and who were too young to proceed thither, it was suggested that for the future all Cavalry recruits should be enlisted at the age of nineteen and upwards. A seven years' colour service was also proposed. These suggestions were referred to a strong Committee, by whom they were endorsed ; and their recommendations were approved by the Army Council. It was decided, however, as a temporary measure permissible in view of the difficulty which had been created by the three years' enlistment, that the entry of Cavalry recruits at the age of eighteen might continue, but should be abandoned as soon as the strength of some of the most depleted regiments had been made up.

It was in this position that matters stood at the close of 1905. If the policy decided upon in that year be continued, the Cavalry difficulty, as it has hitherto existed, will undoubtedly be removed. The number of recruits required under the seven years' term of enlistment is small, and there need be no difficulty in obtaining the necessary number of men of nineteen years of age and upwards for such a popular arm as the Cavalry. The depots, if properly managed, and placed under selected officers, will do as great a service for the Cavalry as the depots of the Royal Artillery and of the Guards have done for those branches of the Service which they supply. When once the system is in proper working order, the practice of drafting

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from one Cavalry regiment to another will cease, as the difficulties which have made it necessary vanish.

THE CAVALRY AND SHORT SERVICE.

It will be observed that hitherto nothing has been said with respect to the enlistment of cavalymen for Short Service. It must not be supposed, however, that this question is not entitled to, or has not received careful consideration. In the plan for organising the Army on the basis of concurrent Long- and Short-Service enlistment, as originally drafted, the placing of a certain number of Cavalry regiments on a Short-Service basis was included. For various reasons it was not thought advisable to proceed with this part of the scheme until that which concerned the Infantry had been dealt with. The total number of Cavalry regiments is small, and there is no considerable excess of regiments beyond the number actually required for peace services. The great improvement in the Imperial Yeomanry makes it possible to regard that force as being in some measure a second line for the Regular Cavalry. Above all, it was absolutely necessary in 1904-5 to make good the shortage in the number of cavalymen available for Indian drafts.

But there can be no doubt that, if at any time it is considered necessary to form a real reserve for the Cavalry, that reserve can best be formed by passing large numbers of men enlisted for two or three years' colour service through regiments serving at home.

In conclusion, it is well to reiterate that the establishment of British Cavalry regiments is too low, and that efficiency as well as economy would be served by raising the rank and file to eight, or even nine hundred. The principal obstacle to

the adoption of this reform is the inadequate barrack accommodation in all our existing cavalry quarters.

THE IMPERIAL YEOMANRY.

THE IMPROVEMENT IN THE YEOMANRY.

Ten years ago the Yeomanry was a dying force, and, as then organised, there was no reason to wish that it should survive. It is no exaggeration to say that in the last few years the Yeomanry has been transformed, and that for the money expended upon it, it represents the best military value the country obtains.

HOW THE YEOMANRY WAS IMPROVED.

What has been the secret of this fortunate transformation? It is a very simple one. It has required no magician's rod to change a moribund, ill-trained, and ill-equipped force into a well-officered, well-manned, and well-mounted body, 25,000 strong, of proved efficiency, and full of vigorous life. Common sense, a reasonable knowledge of human nature, and some regard for the realities of war: these are the simple ingredients of the elixir which has restored the Yeomanry to life. The first step was the direct appeal made to the Yeomanry during the South African War. That the appeal would meet with a ready response no one who knew the officers and men of that much-tried force doubted. It was, however, one thing to make the appeal; it was another and much more important thing to accompany the appeal by an assurance that those who were willing to give their services to the nation should receive from the nation all that was necessary to make that service effective.

Everything was done to increase the prestige

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of the Yeomanry. They entered the field in units and under their own officers. They received Royal recognition in the distinguished title accorded to them. The pay and allowances were placed upon such a footing as to relieve officers and men from the dead weight of expense, which had hitherto made service costly as well as thankless. The training was increased and improved. More was given, and therefore more was asked. In accordance with the invariable rule, officers and men readily responded to the additional calls upon them. Knowing that they were valued, they gave value. In 1903 the Yeomanry, thanks to the wise treatment accorded to it by Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Brodrick, had gained a new lease of life, were prosperous, numerous, and effective.

THE REDUCTION OF THE YEOMANRY ESTABLISHMENTS.

Something, however, still remained to be done. The strength of the regiments varied greatly, and the system not only permitted, but encouraged the enlistment of men, not because they were good Yeomen, but because their enlistment swelled the regimental roll and brought money to the regimental exchequer. The Yeomanry were, in fact, suffering from the same evil which has done so much harm to the Volunteers. Quantity was being sought in preference to quality. It was desirable that so good a force should not continue to suffer from a preventable cause. In 1904 it was decided to fix a maximum establishment for the Yeomanry regiments. An establishment of 476 was settled after consultation with the best Cavalry and Yeomanry authorities as that best calculated to meet the requirements of discipline, training, and manœuvring. The first result of the order was an outburst of dissatisfaction. The dissatisfaction was not unnatural. Many regiments were over the prescribed

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strength, and among these were the best regiments in the country. Commanding officers expressed their disapproval in some cases in strong terms. The order was discussed in the House of Lords, and much was said in its disfavour. Some critics went so far as to prophesy the ruin of the Yeomanry as the inevitable result of an order made, as they declared, without knowledge, and without due regard to the peculiar character of the force.

THE RESULT OF THE ORDER OF 1904.

The order was duly carried out, and its enforcement has proved of inestimable value to the Yeomanry. The best regiments have gained the most. Commanding officers have been enabled to get rid of their bad bargains, to reject unsuitable recruits, and to choose the best men from many applicants. The prestige of the regiments has increased. No club is worth belonging to which any one can enter. Throw the enclosure at Ascot open on payment of a penny toll, and no human being would take the trouble to go there. Beg recruits to do you the favour of joining, and the best men will pass you by: permit a good man to join a regiment, and the best men will seek the privilege. These simple truths are familiar to all of us, but their familiarity has not, hitherto, led to their being extensively practised in our dealings with the Auxiliary Forces. The effect of applying them in the case of the Yeomanry has been everything that could be desired or expected. The numbers have increased, and the strength in 1905 stood at 25,341.

The quality has improved until the reports of the general officers on the condition of the Yeomanry regiments in their districts have become some of the most cheering and satisfactory documents submitted to the Secretary of State for War.

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These facts are recognised by the Yeomanry themselves, and it is permissible to say, to the great credit of the officers concerned, that among those who have borne most generous testimony to the value of the new order, are to be found some of those who were its most severe critics at the time of its issue.

THE LESSONS TO BE LEARNT.

The lesson to be learnt from the facts just recited is a plain one, and has an application which goes far beyond the case of the Yeomanry.

The measures which are essential to secure quality do not necessarily lead to a reduction of quantity. The Yeomanry is much the better for having got rid of its "wasters," and it is stronger than it has ever been. It does pay to relieve officers and men of the excessive cost of their service, and then to ask them to make that service effective. It is wise to allow a force which has been organised in units to fight in units. It is good for a fighting force to know that it is wanted to fight, and that when it does fight it will be expected to be efficient, and to go into action under its own officers and with its own organisation. Some day, no doubt, these lessons will be taken to heart and applied to other branches of the Auxiliary Forces. When they are so applied we may confidently expect the same excellent results.¹

¹ The Secretary of State for War has announced (July, 1906) that it is proposed to make the Imperial Yeomanry liable to service abroad in time of war. There is no reason whatever to criticise this decision, which, indeed, is a most valuable recognition of the real duties of our land forces. At the same time it is necessary to recognise, as the Secretary of State himself has done, that the change may mean a considerable reduction in the numbers of the Yeomanry, and, not improbably, a great change in its character and composition. The proposal to make a portion of the Imperial Yeomanry liable to foreign service was unfavourably received by Parliament and by public opinion a few years ago, and was abandoned. It is to be hoped that the present proposal will meet with a more favourable reception. But while all friends of military efficiency will wish well to the scheme, it must be borne in mind that if we are really to

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SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XIV

THE GUARDS.

1. The Brigade of Guards is now the only Short-Service reserve-producing portion of the Army.
2. In the proposals of 1904 the Guards received special treatment.
3. As soon as Short-Service enlistment is re-opened the question of special treatment for the Guards must be considered.
4. The proposal to reduce the Guards by two battalions, and the reasons for its rejection.
5. The provision of officers for the Brigade.

THE CAVALRY.

6. Various expedients have been tried to meet the drafting difficulty in the Cavalry.
7. The system sanctioned in 1904-5 will remove the difficulty if continued.
8. The creation of "Short-Service" Cavalry regiments is desirable, but it is not advisable to take action in that direction at present.
9. The establishment of a British cavalry regiment is too low.

THE IMPERIAL YEOMANRY.

10. Ten years ago the Yeomanry was on the point of perishing: it is now in a most satisfactory condition.
11. The improvement of the Yeomanry has been effected by the application of common-sense principles.

depend upon the Yeomanry to form an effective part of our fighting force over-seas, we must take them seriously. We must trust to no play-about cavalry "run" by the County Councils in the intervals of municipal and political disputes, but must form regiments which, in whatever capacity they may be employed, will be equal, man for man and horse for horse, to the enemy to whom they may be opposed. We must provide stores, transport, guns, everything that is necessary to transform a willing soldiery into a modern army. If we do less than this the game will not be worth playing: and we shall succeed in deceiving no one save that eternal dupe the British public. Incidentally, of course, the Secretary of State's dictum that not another penny is to be spent upon the Auxiliary Forces, must be modified, or explained away. More money must be spent if the Yeomanry are really to become a part of the field army for service abroad.

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12. The order reducing the Yeomanry establishments was a wise one, and has been amply justified by results.

13. What has taken place with respect to the Yeomanry is a proof that the improvement of quality need not mean the reduction of quantity.

14. The principles which have been applied with success to the Imperial Yeomanry might with advantage be applied to other branches of the Auxiliary Forces.

15. (*Note*)—The decision to enlist the Yeomanry for foreign service in time of war is a wise one; but will only be justified if the Yeomanry are seriously equipped and prepared to take their place in a field army serving abroad.

CHAPTER XV

THE RECRUITING QUESTION

MISCONCEPTIONS WITH REGARD TO RECRUITING.

It is probable that on no question connected with Army Reform is there more misconception, more ignorance of essential facts, than that of recruiting. With curious unanimity public speakers and the press have deplored the falling off in recruiting, have declared that it is inadequate for the maintenance of the Army, and that strenuous and revolutionary measures are necessary to save the Army from dissolution. There is no foundation for any of these assertions.

Recruiting has not fallen off; recruiting is not inadequate, and no revolutionary measures are necessary. And yet, though the popular criticism is based on a series of misconceptions, there is need for considerable change in the system of recruiting, and the results of the present system are, from the military point of view, unsatisfactory. These categorical statements require explanation and justification. It is proposed to furnish both.

CONSCRIPTION IS NOT AN AVAILABLE RESOURCE.

The British Army is a voluntary army, an army, that is, which is recruited by voluntary enlistment. No other country in Europe dares to raise its soldiers on this system. We can afford, for reasons which it would be out of place to recapitulate in this chapter, to dispense with conscription, compulsory service, universal service—all synonyms for much the same thing.

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If and when the nation is convinced that compulsory service is necessary, and if and when Parliament passes the laws necessary to enforce conscription, the Army problem, as it at present exists, will be entirely altered and to a great extent simplified. But that time has not yet arrived. The nation does not yet entertain the conviction that conscription is either necessary or desirable; there is much reason to believe that the opinion of the vast majority of the nation is inexorably opposed to its introduction.

The whole question of conscription and of its adoption, and the question of the value of conscription when the conscript is not available for service over-sea, is dealt with in another chapter. Whatever may be the accepted policy of the future, the accepted policy of the present is perfectly definite and clear. The right to raise an army by conscription under any form is denied to the Army Council, and the only right the Council possess is to work the voluntary system to the best of their ability.

THE SUPPLY OF RECRUITS IS ADEQUATE.

It is one of the many fallacies which have gained currency in connection with the Army that the number of recruits is inadequate, and that there is a dangerous decline in recruiting. The statement is in some instances made with a motive, and usually with the object of proving that conscription or compulsory service in some other form, is necessary. In many cases, however, it is merely repeated by despondent persons who find satisfaction in depicting everything connected with the Army in the gloomiest colours.

As a matter of fact it is not true to say either that the number of recruits who offer themselves is inadequate, or that there is a serious falling off in the rate of recruiting.

The state of recruiting is not satisfactory, and in

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some respects gives just cause for alarm, but the alarm is not, or at any rate ought not to be caused by the lack of men. It is in quality, and not in quantity that the supply of recruits is deficient. If the quality were what it ought to be, and if the recruits actually obtained were utilised in a sensible manner, there would be ample material for the present requirements of the Army. Nay, more, a very slight readjustment of the terms of service would give us that large reserve for the Regular Army which all students of our military problem are at one in demanding.

When, however, a commonly received misconception has to be removed, and especially when the acceptance of an error is necessary to support a large structure of incorrect but popular argument, something more than mere assertion is required.

THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF RECRUITS TAKEN.

It will be well, therefore, to come at once to the facts as revealed by the Recruiting Returns.

The following table gives the essential particulars with regard to recruiting during a period of ten years, omitting those years which were affected by the war in South Africa.

RECRUITS FOR THE REGULAR ARMY AND MILITIA.

| YEAR. | REGULAR ARMY. | | MILITIA. | | TOTAL ARMY AND MILITIA. | |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------|-------------------------|-----------|
| | Total. | Infantry. | Total. | Infantry. | Total. | Infantry. |
| 1896 | 28,532 | 17,246 | 35,410 | 30,926 | 63,942 | 48,272 |
| 1897 | 35,015 | 21,017 | 38,212 | 32,215 | 73,227 | 52,232 |
| 1898 | 40,729 | 23,438 | 40,127 | 35,478 | 80,856 | 58,916 |
| YEARS AFFECTED BY THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA. | | | | | | |
| 1904 | 42,642 | 30,311 ¹ | 35,264 | 29,165 | 77,906 | 59,476 |
| 1905 | 35,824 ² | 22,170 ³ | 29,941 ³ | 24,562 | 65,765 | 46,732 |

¹ Other arms to a large extent closed.

² Long-Service enlistment and standard of rejection increased.

³ Standard raised.

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It will be observed that the year 1904 is abnormal as regards recruiting for the Infantry of the Line; the number taken in that year was no less than 30,311, an excess of 8,141 over the figures for 1905.

The explanation is simple. Apart from the slight falling-off in recruiting generally which marks 1905 in comparison with the exceptional year of 1904, the decrease in the latter year is due to the fact that all other arms of the Service were open to recruiting, whereas during nearly the whole of 1904 recruiting for all arms other than the Infantry was wholly or partially closed. It is of course natural that when the Infantry alone is "open," that branch should receive an abnormal contingent of recruits; and that directly the more popular and better remunerated branches are opened the number of Infantry recruits should diminish. The point referred to is only mentioned in order to explain a figure which might otherwise mislead; but the point once noted, we may return to the consideration of the general question. It will be seen that the average number of recruits for the Regular Army during the five years referred to in the table has been 38,500, and of Infantry recruits 22,800. During the year 1905 the actual numbers of Infantry recruits show a falling-off, the actual difference on the twelve months ending December, 1904, and December, 1905, respectively being 8,141.

THE EFFECT OF SHORT-SERVICE ENLISTMENTS.

But a brief examination will suffice to show that this reduction need cause no alarm. In 1904 short-service recruiting (three years' colour service with power of extension) was the rule of the service. On October 1st, 1904, nine years' enlistment was introduced for the Infantry of the Line, and during the same year a seven-years' term was adopted for

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the Cavalry. In view of the difficulties which arose in connection with the short-service enlistment, difficulties which have been explained in detail elsewhere, it had been necessary to take every recruit whom the doctors would pass. But the introduction of the nine-years' term justified the Army Council in increasing the stringency of the medical examination, and thereby diminishing the number of approved recruits.

There is, however, not the slightest reason to doubt that the action taken in 1905 will be amply rewarded, and that in the following years there will be a sensible and most beneficial diminution in the number of young men who are compelled to leave the Army as being "medically unfit," or "not likely to become efficient soldiers." It has been necessary to refer to these matters of detail, not on account of their intrinsic importance, but because they explain the Recruiting Returns of 1905, which have been much misunderstood, and which have been made the foundation for various incorrect conclusions. Stringency in medical examination is not always possible, but it is always desirable. One effect of the large number of rejections in 1905 was apparent in the Recruiting Returns for that year. In some stations the rejections reached the high figure of 75 per cent. of the men offering. In the four months from April 1st to July 31st, the total number of recruits accepted was 10,186, as compared with 12,464 in the corresponding period of the previous year. But the other and more important result of the "screwing up" of the medical test is not yet apparent; nor will it be apparent until the returns of "waste" in subsequent years can be examined.

CONCURRENT ENLISTMENT.

One other fallacy remains to be exposed. In the autumn of 1905 an important experiment was made.

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Concurrent recruiting was opened for long and short service respectively. The experiment was not only important, it was crucial. The whole future of the Regular Army may be said to depend upon the successful working of the double system. Without it a Long-Service and a Short-Service Army can never be raised and maintained side by side. For those who were determined that an army so constituted should never be formed, it speedily became a matter of faith to assert that concurrent recruiting must necessarily be a failure. Until the experiment was tried, the assertion took the form of prophecy. Despite the experience of the past, which supplied numerous examples of the truth of the contrary proposition, it was declared that under no circumstances could men be recruited side by side for two different terms of service.

In October, 1905, the impossible was attempted. It was not only attempted, but it was accomplished. In seven depots men were permitted to enlist, at their own choice, for nine years' colour service with three years in the Reserve, or for two years' colour service with ten years in the Reserve. Those enlisted for the longer term of colour service obtained certain advantages in the matter of pay. The experiment was made under most disadvantageous circumstances. Nothing was done to inform intending recruits of the nature of the alternative. It is, perhaps, not too much to say that in some cases very slight encouragement was given to the two-years men. None of the large recruiting districts such as London, Birmingham, or Glasgow were thrown open. But as to the result of the experiment, there can be no doubt that it was a remarkable and unqualified success. The fact was not, and, indeed, never has been, properly appreciated by the public. Those who had so steadily prophesied the failure of concurrent recruiting were slow to recognise a result which failed to coincide

with their gloomy but confident anticipations. Positive statements appeared in the press to the effect that the new system had broken down, and official authority was attached without any justification to the statements which were made. It is most desirable that this incorrect impression should be removed. It is, however, only necessary to give the figures to demonstrate that the anticipations formed by those who introduced the system were amply fulfilled; that the system provided exactly what was required, and that, so far from proving a failure, it was a complete and remarkable success. In the few weeks during which concurrent recruiting was open in the seven depots referred to, 52 per cent. of the men who were enrolled enlisted for short service, 48 per cent. for long service. In other words, it was made abundantly clear that as many short-service men as are required can be obtained by opening short-service enlistment from time to time, concurrently with long-service enlistment. The fact is of great importance, for it justifies everything that has been said as to the desirability and the possibility of raising and maintaining a Long-Service Army and a Short-Service Army side by side.

It is greatly to be regretted that this interesting and important experiment was put an end to by the Army Council in January, 1906. Since that date the creation of a Reserve for the Regular Army has practically ceased.

THE ANNUAL CONTINGENT OF RECRUITS.

Having dealt with some of the peculiar features of recruiting during recent years, it is necessary to return to the general question of the methods of recruiting adopted in our Army, with a view to enquiring whether they are adapted to their purpose,

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and whether they are not susceptible of improvement. It has been made clear elsewhere that the number of recruits taken annually is amply sufficient to maintain the Regular Army under normal conditions.¹

As to the quality of the recruits, the state of things is not equally satisfactory. The quality of the recruits for some branches is excellent ; in others it leaves much to be desired. In the opinion of many officers the average has improved, but there seems no reason to believe that the improvement is very general or very marked, and yet there can be no doubt that there is ample room for improvement. Can we hope to obtain it ? An affirmative answer may probably be given, but only on condition that the policy which has hitherto directed recruiting operations be modified.

Many officers of experience are of opinion that both as regards numbers and quality the annual contingent of recruits represents a fixed and immutable element. They consider that a certain quota of the population comes into the recruiting market each year ; that, within very narrow limits, this quota cannot be increased by any change of system or by any addition to the inducements offered, and they further hold that no steps which the Army Council is empowered to take are likely to induce a fresh class of men to enter the ranks : as things have been, so they will be, and they point to the fact that, year after year, the same class of men, and approximately the same number, are added to the Army. It is impossible not to attach great weight to the opinions of officers who have given their lives to the Service, and who are

¹ The existing conditions (1906) are not normal. Owing to the fact that expiration of the term of service of all the three-years men still remaining in the Army coincided with the discharge of a number of men who extended their colour service from eight to twelve years during the South African War, the waste in all branches of the Army is abnormal, and can only be repaired gradually by the ordinary processes of recruiting.

devoted to its interests. Nevertheless, the conclusion at which these counsellors would have us arrive is a melancholy one, and not lightly to be accepted. Fortunately, there are some reasons for believing that we are justified in entertaining a more sanguine view. It is perfectly true that, hitherto, the very great improvement in the conditions of the soldier's life has not produced a corresponding improvement in the number and quality of the recruits. It would not be true to say that no improvement has taken place. As has been shown, the total number of recruits is now large; many men of excellent character and good physique enlist, and it may be truly asserted of the recruits as a whole that they are more amenable and, probably, better conducted than their predecessors of twenty or thirty years ago. But it is true to say that the improvement in quality and quantity has not kept pace with the improvement in the terms offered. If it could be shown that everything had been done to bring home to the classes which furnish our recruits, or which might furnish them, the extent and character of the improvement which has taken place, and that, nevertheless, no response had been evoked, there would, indeed, be some reason for despondency. But there can be no doubt at all that hitherto we have failed to obtain full value for our money and our effort because we have not taken ordinary and reasonable means to explain to the people most concerned what we have done and what we are offering.

It is an indisputable fact that in any ordinary assembly of Englishmen, not one person out of a hundred will be found to have any idea approaching to accuracy of the amount of pay which the soldier receives. Indeed, this ignorance is not confined to the general public, but has, at any rate for many years, been shared by those who might be supposed to be acquainted with an important fact which

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closely concerns the national expenditure and the welfare of the public service. Even to this day complaints are to be seen in the newspapers to the effect that the private soldier does not get the modest shilling a day, which in theory he was entitled to receive in the reign of William III.; and the fact that the pay of the soldier has been practically doubled within the last few years is even now unknown to millions of people whom it deeply concerns. It is perhaps not very remarkable that this ignorance should prevail. The methods of the War Office have not been conducive to publicity as it is understood in an ordinary business concern. The order which practically doubled the pay of the soldier postponed any immediate benefit to any individual for two years, and the fact that at the end of that time certain men would receive an increase in their emoluments was so carefully concealed under the obscurity of a litter of warrants, orders, cross-references and exceptions, that very few, save the skilled accountants at the War Office, could have told any man what he did receive or would receive.

THE PAY OF THE SOLDIER.

It is well, therefore, to take this opportunity of explaining how good are the terms now offered to the ordinary soldier. In the year 1905 tables were prepared showing the actual payments in cash per week, after stoppages of every kind had been deducted, to privates serving in a battery of Artillery, a regiment of Cavalry, and a battalion of Infantry respectively.

The Infantry pay is the lowest. The figures of an Infantry battalion will therefore be quoted. The tables showed conclusively that the actual average sum paid, in cash, to privates serving for seven or nine years taken every week throughout

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the year and every company throughout the battalion, was no less than 11s. 7d. per man. It must be borne in mind that the men to whom this calculation applies were men who had earned none of the additional emoluments which can be obtained by any diligent and efficient soldier—extra pay for shooting, pay as a corporal, etc. Now, when it is remembered that the recipient of this sum of 11s. 7d. weekly is a young man of twenty years of age, who has no handicraft, no special accomplishment, nothing to raise him above his fellows; that he is clothed, fed, doctored, and housed free; that he is educated; that his health is looked after; that his sport and recreation are provided for; that his travelling expenses are paid, and that the cash he receives is what remains after various deductions have been made for extra clothing and additional diet—it will be realised that his position compares very favourably with that of the ordinary young man of the class to which he belongs.

Let us compare it, for instance, with the position of the agricultural labourer. In many cases the soldier is drawn from the labouring class. We have seen that at twenty years of age he may, as a soldier, be earning 11s. 7d. in cash every week of the year; and obtaining, in addition, all the other advantages which have been enumerated above. Reasonable intelligence and good conduct will practically ensure his promotion; he may become, and probably will become, a sergeant or a warrant officer. If he serve for twenty-one years he will leave the service at the age of thirty-nine with a pension varying from 1s. to 2s. 6d. a day.

How different would his lot have been had he elected to remain an agricultural labourer! At the age of forty he might be in receipt of from 14s. to 18s. a week, with perhaps a cottage worth another 2s. a week. Out of this slender wage he has, if a

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married man, to support his wife and children. Out of it he must provide food, clothing, and such few luxuries in the form of tobacco and beer as are compatible with such humble means. If he desires to make any provision against sickness, disablement or old age, he must make a weekly payment to his club. Clearly, the soldier of twenty has little reason to envy the labourer of forty. Nor indeed is the position of the soldier much, if at all, inferior to that of many skilled artisans. It has been calculated, and the calculation is a moderate and reasonable one, that the pay and emoluments of the private soldier represent a weekly wage of no less than 34s. There are many trades, some of them skilled trades, in which the wage of a young man does not exceed, or even reach, this figure. And be it remembered that we are dealing, throughout this comparison, not with what may be called the "skilled ratings" of the Army, the telegraphists, engineers, mechanics, etc., still less with the non-commissioned and warrant ranks, but simply with the ordinary infantry private of twenty, before he has begun to rise in the service.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XV.

1. The popular view that there is a break-down in recruiting for the Army is without foundation.
2. The total number of recruits enlisted annually is adequate, provided the men enlisted are properly utilised.
3. The adoption of short-service enlistment for the whole Army created an abnormal situation. But the introduction of nine years' enlistment in 1904 will eventually redress the error.
4. It is a fallacy to suppose that concurrent enlistment for long and short service has been a failure. The contrary is the truth.
5. Concurrent enlistment in some form is inevitable.
6. The present contingent of recruits, though adequate in

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quantity, is not altogether satisfactory as regards quality. It does not represent the total number of men who may be made available.

7. The pay of the private soldier compares most favourably with the wages of other men of his class; but the nature of the soldier's emoluments is not yet fully appreciated and understood by the public.

CHAPTER XVI

THE RECRUITING QUESTION

(continued)

WHY WE DO NOT GET FULL VALUE FOR THE
SOLDIER'S PAY.

BUT, it will be asked, why, if the terms offered are so good, as has been represented in the preceding chapter, is the response so unsatisfactory? Before attempting to reply to this very pertinent query, it is necessary to point out that as a matter of fact the response is not small. As has been explained in an earlier chapter, the total number of recruits taken for the Army is large, amounting on an average to 36,000 a year; and for every recruit accepted, one is rejected. But though from the point of view of numbers the response to the country's offer is adequate, from the point of view of quality it leaves much to be desired. The nation has, undoubtedly, not yet obtained full value for the money it expends.

What is the reason for this unsatisfactory result? The answer is that there is not one reason, but several; and that all these reasons have hitherto combined to keep many men out of the Army who might, with great advantage to themselves and to the country, take service in its ranks.

These causes may be enumerated as follows:—

1. The old tradition of Army service, which makes the calling of the soldier unpopular in this country.

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2. The failure of the military authorities to adapt the methods by which recruiting is carried on to the conditions of the time.

3. The uncertainty of employment on discharge.

4. The condition of the barracks and of barrack life.

5. The competition of the Auxiliary Forces.

These various causes deserve to be considered separately, though their action is cumulative.

THE UNPOPULARITY OF ARMY SERVICE.

It is a matter of universal knowledge that, for many generations, the enlistment of a young man in the Army was looked upon in nearly every home in the country as a sorrow and a disgrace. There was only too much reason for the feeling. The Service was viewed with suspicion, and of those who were not driven there by want, many were cajoled or trepanned into the ranks. The soldier was hardly treated, ill-remunerated, and often abominably neglected when his service was over. In the Navy, the whole system of entry was revolutionised by the introduction of voluntary service, and by the adoption of boy entries. The days of the press gang and all the sordid, unpleasant episodes attendant on the old method of commissioning and manning ships of war were forgotten. To this day the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines sweep the county of Cornwall and half Devon, and the recruits for the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry come in large measure from London.

In the Royal Marines it is not rare to find families in which enlistment in the corps is an hereditary distinction. The same thing is not unknown in certain regiments of the Army, but it is very rare; and as there has never been any sharp break in the system of enlistment, traditions

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of evil days have lingered on long after the conditions from which they sprang have ceased to exist. Slowly, too slowly, but none the less surely, the feeling towards the Army is changing and improving. The institution of a demand for characters on enlistment has done much, and will do more, to give the Army the position in the minds of the mothers, sisters, and sweethearts of the intending recruits to which it is now justly entitled. The efforts of the officers, always one of the most constant influences for good in the Army; the improvement in the conditions of the soldier's life—these and many other causes are gradually removing the prejudice against the Service which has existed so long, and which, it would be idle to deny, still exists in many parts of the country.

RECRUITING METHODS.

There can be no doubt whatever that there is room for immense improvement in our recruiting methods. Those who visit our recruiting depots will have observed how little variety there is in the class of men who offer themselves, and will have noted that, as a rule, the class is below that which the solid advantages and emoluments of Army service might be expected to attract. But the mystery is to some extent explained when we consider what are the methods which are taken to attract the recruit, and what is the gate through which he is invited to enter his new profession.

Generally speaking, it is true to say that the reliance of the Recruiting Department is still placed to a great extent upon "Sergeant Kite." Non-commissioned officers in uniform still hang about the corners of the streets, and exercise all their powers of cajolery and persuasion to induce

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young ne'er-do-weels, and men obviously out-of-work, to accompany them to the recruiting station.

It would be unfair to say a word against those who are charged with this difficult and uncongenial duty—a duty which they perform with much devotion and skill. Nor would it be reasonable to denounce a system, or to recommend its discontinuance unless, and until, an adequate substitute has been provided.

But the system is not sound ; and until it has become possible to obtain recruits in some other fashion, we shall do well not to rest content. There is no other calling or profession in the country to which men are attracted by this means. A trade or profession is filled up because its attractions and prospects are well known to the community at large, and especially to those from whom its members are usually drawn. It is not necessary to place touts at the street corners to induce men to become mechanics, compositors, policemen, or cabdrivers. Nor, indeed, are such means resorted to in those cases in which it is necessary to apply persuasion and explanation in order to induce unwilling persons to realise the advantages of an offer which is made to them. An insurance agent, a book agent, an advertiser of any speciality has to persuade his clients or his customers of the advantage of the terms he is offering them ; but in order to catch his man and to carry conviction, he does not station uniformed agents in the public thoroughfares to whom no customer can speak without attracting attention. Such persons resort to canvassing, to advertisement, and to other means of making their needs and their offers known ; and as a rule these means are eminently successful. So, in time, it will be with the Army. The advantages of the Army are now very real, and there is no reason why they should not become as

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widely known to all concerned as the advantages of tailoring, of brick-making, or of brick-laying. When they are equally known and understood, parents and relatives will choose the military calling for their sons and their charges, not less readily than they now choose the Navy or any of the various trades.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that no progress is being made in the desired direction. A great deal has been done, and is being done, by the Director of Recruiting and his subordinates to make the advantages of the Army known by advertisements, by lectures, and by articles in the newspapers. In 1905 a valuable series of articles appeared in the press setting forth in popular language much that is contained in this chapter, and by this and other means the public is gradually learning that the Army is now a good, an honourable, and a well-remunerated profession. When this knowledge has been thoroughly disseminated, the need for the perambulating recruiter, who appeals to one class only—and perhaps also scares off as many men as he attracts—will disappear.

But the perambulating recruiter is not the only feature in our system which tends to discourage the would-be recruit.

RECRUITING DEPOTS.

The condition of our recruiting depots has hitherto been such as to keep very many men out of the Army. For many years the Central Recruiting Depot in London—that at the back of the National Gallery—was in a disreputable, not to say a disgusting condition—cold, comfortless, cheerless, and unclean. After years of effort some of those who were interested in the welfare of the soldier secured a slight improvement, but the

place is still unworthy of the Army and the nation. It is in the wrong situation, it is squalid in appearance, unattractive and ill-furnished within—everything, indeed, which a place should not be, if it is to attract a young man and to reconcile him to a new and important departure in his life.

How unattractive and inadequate these recruiting stations often are is perhaps scarcely realised by those who spend their lives in them; but to an outsider they are melancholy enough.

It would probably pay the country over and over again if the old Recruiting Office in St. George's Barracks were to be destroyed, and a new, handsome, and attractive building, prominently situated in a great thoroughfare, were to take its place. A recruit for the Army should be able to walk into the office in which he is to begin his career in search of a privilege, instead of being ashamed of the offer which circumstances compel him to make.

Nor is it sufficient to improve the depot itself. The young soldier ought on no account to be disgusted or disappointed during the early days of his service.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION—AN OBJECT-LESSON

A single example will suffice to show that there is room for consideration even in small matters. For many years it has been the practice to assemble all recruits together for their medical examination in the same room, and to keep them in attendance while others are being examined, without a particle of clothing. It is of course essential that the men should be stripped for examination, but it is not necessary that they should remain stripped in each other's company. There is no class in this country in which the association of a number of men and boys, perfect strangers to each other, in a state of

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absolute nudity would not be contrary to custom, and regarded as objectionable. There is no valid reason why the practice should continue. The attention of the Recruiting Branch was in fact called to it in 1905, and a change was immediately made with the goodwill of all concerned. The necessary clothing was supplied for the use of the recruits while waiting their turn. But there was no reason, save want of comprehension of the state of public feeling, why the custom should have gone on so long. Here, again, it was probably not those who submitted to the ordeal who objected to it. Those who did object to it declined to submit to it.

Again, it is very desirable that the drill during the first few weeks of a man's service should not be either excessive or very dull and mechanical. This fact is now thoroughly appreciated by many officers, and the most trying time of a soldier's life is made much easier than it has hitherto been. It is probable that the very large waste of young soldiers will be sensibly abated by this wise relaxation.

THE UNCERTAINTY OF EMPLOYMENT ON DISCHARGE.

There can be no doubt that the great obstacle to recruiting from a better class is the failure of our present system to provide certain employment for soldiers of good character on discharge.

There is no need to dilate upon the subject. The absence of such an assurance not only may, but must affect recruiting; and it must necessarily affect quality even more than quantity. The position of a soldier under the existing system is essentially precarious. Entering the Army at the age of eighteen, he passes into the Reserve at the age of twenty-five or twenty-seven, and as a reservist is still liable to be recalled to the colours, a fact

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which in itself imposes limitations upon his chances of obtaining employment. Unless he has served in some special branch, the Engineers or one of the mounted corps, the soldier has, as a rule, learnt little which makes him specially fit for industrial work on re-entering civil life.

Moreover, the Labour Organisations are exceedingly jealous of the competition of workers who have not passed through the regular phases of the trade, and the hand of the Trade Union is heavy against the ex-soldier.¹

The position of the soldier on discharge would indeed be lamentable if he were compelled to depend solely on his own exertions, or upon the action of the State, to procure employment. Fortunately he has many and good friends. The Discharged Soldiers' Aid Society, and other bodies of a similar kind, and, above all, the Regimental Associations managed by the officers and their friends, do splendid service in helping the soldier to obtain employment. The Government, too,

¹ A Committee has recently been formed to inquire into the possibility of teaching soldiers a trade while serving. The idea is not a new one. The whole subject was raised some twenty years ago, and a Committee appointed, as usual. As a result, turning-lathes and carpenters' benches were served out to all units at home, and proper instructors were appointed. Sanguine persons expected valuable results, but were disappointed. The present writer well remembers a visit paid to Aldershot during this period. On asking for the colonel of a certain battalion he was informed that he was "in the workshop." The colonel was indeed there, in his shirt-sleeves, making toys for the children; but the private soldier, for whose benefit the workshops had been instituted, was not there, and indeed did not frequent the workshop at all. The experiment failed, and under the existing conditions was bound to fail. That it can be made to succeed, provided the conditions of barrack life are adapted to that object, any one who visits the Royal Marine Depot and barracks can see for himself. In these permanent homes of the Corps the men make their own boots and clothes, and execute the greater part of the barrack repairs. A certain number of men also have recently been trained to take charge of motor-cars. An inspection of the "Employment Book" at the headquarters of one of the Royal Marine Divisions is very instructive and encouraging. When the Army is willing to learn a lesson from the Marines, and to establish permanent headquarters for its units, it may hope to achieve the same success as the fortunate wearers of the "Globe and Laurel."

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does a little—far too little—in the way of appointing ex-soldiers to places in the Government offices. The result of the united efforts of these various agencies is considerable, as may be judged from the following figures taken from the Report of the Inspector-General of Recruiting for the year 1905 :

| | |
|--|--------|
| Number discharged to Reserve with "Exemplary," "Very Good," or "Good" characters | 31,321 |
| Number of men for whom employment has been found | 25,362 |

RIGHT, NOT CHARITY.

But, though it is satisfactory to know that large numbers of soldiers actually find employment of some kind, it would be a grave mistake to suppose that employment provided in this manner seriously affects the recruiting problem. A self-respecting young man, or—what in this case is even more important—the parents and guardians of a self-respecting young man are not wont to consider the chance of charity as a sufficiently sound foundation on which to construct the scheme of a life. The parents who decide to send their son into the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, the Police, or the Constabulary know that, if he is well-conducted and takes reasonable pains to make himself efficient in his calling, he is provided for for life, and in his old age will occupy a position not without social distinction, and which he will be able to maintain out of the income he receives. The parents of a young man entering the Army might, if they were students of official statistics, become aware that the chances of their son achieving a satisfactory position and being provided for during life are considerable, and if they possessed this knowledge, they might elect to take the chance of his not being

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one of the failures. But the ordinary parent has not this knowledge, and, moreover, is only too often confronted with the fact that thousands of men do leave the Army for whom no provision is made, and who obtain no employment, or, at best, employment of a menial and unremunerative nature. Until this uncertainty is exchanged for the right to make a definite calculation, the Army will continue to suffer. Nor even if a change be made now will the relief be immediate or general.

It is frequently made a matter of complaint by employers that men who leave the Army on discharge are ill-fitted for employment, having neither the habit of work nor the intelligence which highly remunerative work requires. The charge is true, but the explanation is not far to seek. It is chiefly those who are improvident, and who are compelled to trust to chance for their future, who will enter an employment which affords no certain prospect.¹ The men who go in are the men who come out, and thus a vicious circle is established; the unfavourable opinion which is too often formed of the capacity of the discharged soldier operates to prevent the entry of men who, were they to join the Service, would leave it much more fit for civil life than many of those who now pass into the Reserve.

The moral of all which is that the recruiting question is intimately bound up with the question of the employment of men on discharge; and that until young men entering the Army, or their parents, can count upon a certain fixed reward for the faithful performance of certain prescribed duties, the number of improvident and comparatively use-

¹ A Committee, under the presidency of the Secretary to the War Office, was appointed by the Secretary of State for War in 1905 to inquire into the question of the employment of soldiers on discharge. The report has been presented since the present Government took office. It contains some valuable suggestions.

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less men who enter the Army will continue to be undesirably large.

This is not the place to describe the methods by which the vicious circle to which we have referred can be broken and the requisite certainty be introduced into the soldier's career, but the subject is dealt with at length elsewhere (Chapter VIII.). In that chapter a method is indicated by which the problem of the employment of soldiers on discharge may be reduced to reasonable limits, and by which the Long-Service soldier of good character may be guaranteed a position as satisfactory as that of the Seaman, the Marine, and the Policeman.

BARRACKS AND BARRACK LIFE.

The condition of our barracks is discussed at length elsewhere.¹ There can be no doubt that in many respects they leave much to be desired, and that even as buildings they are unsatisfactory and unattractive, and the impression which they make upon those who see them or visit them is not a good one. Improvements are, however, taking place, and, in time, these improvements will undoubtedly have their effect in raising the prestige of the Army as a profession in the eyes of those who have not, hitherto, been prepared to send their sons into its ranks.

There is, however, much to be done inside the barracks as well as outside. It would be perfectly idle to expect great refinement or opportunities for privacy in barracks. There must always be a considerable amount of "rough-and-tumble" in the life of the young soldier. But here, again, it must be remembered that though every sensible and courageous young man will gladly put up with hardship, and will be perfectly content to "rough it" as far as the circumstances of his calling require, there is

¹ See Chapters XXVI., XXVII., XXVIII.

a point beyond which he will not consent to go. If there be too marked a contrast between the amenities and decencies of the life which he is compelled to live as a soldier, and those of the life to which he is accustomed as a civilian, he will not become a soldier. No one who is acquainted with the details of barrack life can fail to be aware that in many instances the life in barracks is still very much what it was twenty years ago. There has been progress, but it has not been universal, and things are said, done, and endured in the barrack-room which undoubtedly give offence to those who are accustomed to a totally different habit of life. It is idle to say, as some apologists do, that life in a barrack-room is, in the case of most young soldiers, more refined and more luxurious than that to which they have been accustomed in their own homes. This may be perfectly true, and yet be wholly irrelevant to the real issue. The point which has to be considered is not whether there are many men in the Army to whom a very rudimentary condition of comfort and decency is familiar and therefore tolerable, but whether the existence of this standard in the Army does not keep out of it many who, with great advantage to themselves and to the nation, might be in it. The subject is not one which it is easy to discuss without appearing vague on the one hand, or seeming to exaggerate on the other. But the statements which have been made are made with knowledge, and are true. It is, therefore, most desirable that the process of improving and humanising life in barracks, which has already been begun, should proceed even more rapidly in the future than it has done in the past. The real friend or the real enemy of the recruiting sergeant is the discharged soldier. If he returns to civil life proud of the Service, and content with the conditions under which he lived, he will do more than any other agent to popularise the Service. If,

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on the other hand, he has stories to tell about the discomforts and the lack of decency in barrack life which produce feelings of disgust or contempt in the minds of his womankind, he will thereby become the centre of an ever-widening circle of unfriendliness towards the Army and towards the profession of a soldier. We have it in our power to ensure that every discharged soldier shall have a good word to say for the Service. It is obviously in the interest of the country to make certain that that power shall be exercised.

BOYS' BRIGADES AND THE ARMY.

An opinion is widely entertained and is frequently expressed to the effect that recruiting for the Army is stimulated by the existence of the Auxiliary Forces and of various quasi-Military Institutions, such as Cadet Corps and Boys' Brigades. This view, however, is erroneous. So far from it being true that service in the Auxiliary Forces, or membership of any of the associations referred to, helps the recruiting for the Regular Army, the exact contrary is probably nearer the truth. That the Volunteers have taken many men from the Militia is beyond doubt; in some cases the actual process of transfer can be observed, and there are instances in which as many as from 300 to 400 men have been transferred from a Militia battalion to a Volunteer battalion. Whether these transfers are in themselves desirable is a matter of opinion, but there appears to be no ground whatever for the view that the existence of the Volunteers assists recruiting for the Army. Still less is it true that the training of boys helps recruiting. That the training in itself is an excellent thing for the boys there can be little doubt, but it tends to keep young men from the Army rather than to send them into it. By the time

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a boy who has joined one of these corps has arrived at the age of eighteen the novelty of soldiering has gone off, and drill and exercises have become tedious. This is true also to a certain extent of the Cadet Corps of the Public Schools, as well as of the Cadet Corps and Boys' Brigades elsewhere. There seems no reason to believe that the existence of the School Volunteer Corps adds to the number of candidates for commissions.

It is sometimes said that the War Office has been slow to recognise the peculiar position occupied by the Boys' Brigades, and that if the authorities had shown themselves sympathetic, and endeavoured to suit Army conditions to the wishes of the boys, they might have obtained a large number of recruits from the Brigades. But in this, as in many other matters, the War Office has been somewhat hastily condemned. The conditions under which the Boys' Brigades are raised are well known to the Army Council, and there is every disposition to meet their views as far as is consistent with the welfare of the Service. In 1904 it was suggested to the War Office that many recruits would join from the Boys' Brigades provided that the age of entry was slightly reduced so as to bridge the period of unemployment between discharge from the Brigade and entry into the Army, and that the sound training of the boys was recognised by a reduction in the severity of the preliminary drill. It was pointed out, with reason, that to compel recruits who had just left a well-trained and efficient "Brigade" to go through the whole of the recruit's course was to impose much unnecessary drudgery. The Army Council accepted the view, and took immediate action. A letter was addressed to the officials of the principal Boys' Brigades, in which it was stated that it was proposed to issue orders that Army recruits enlisted from Boys' Brigades should be specially treated and should be pushed

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on as rapidly as possible in their drills after joining their units. The various Brigades were asked whether they would agree to assist the object aimed at by furnishing certificates showing the classification of the lads as regards military efficiency and the amount of military training already received.

It is a remarkable fact that among the many organisations so appealed to, the Jewish Lads' Brigade was the only one which expressed readiness to comply with this simple and reasonable request, and to assist the War Office in the manner proposed.

THE COMPETITION OF THE AUXILIARY FORCES.

It is not, however, only the influence of the Cadet Corps in keeping men out of the Regular Army which is detrimental to recruiting. The direct competition of the Auxiliary Forces has to be reckoned with. The competition is natural enough, and as long as the country considers it expedient to maintain three or four different armies for different purposes, it would be unreasonable to object that the maintenance of one interferes with the maintenance of another. That it should do so is, of course, inevitable. To use a homely phrase, "we cannot both eat our cake and have it." If we are to maintain some 400,000 men in the Militia, Volunteers, and Yeomanry, the Regular Army must be *pro tanto* deprived of the services of these men. But if we accept the situation, it is all the more incumbent upon the nation to insist upon some organisation which will make these various armies really one for the purposes of war. If it be true, as has so often been said by many high authorities, that the function of our Army is principally to fight battles across the sea, then

beyond question all those soldiers who, by law, are confined to service in this country are a deduction from the effective strength of the Army. That some of them may, in the event of war, volunteer for service abroad is true, but there is no evidence to show that the existence of units dedicated to home service only is a necessary condition precedent to volunteering on the part of those who desire to serve abroad in time of war. The existence of such bodies is no doubt of value in some ways, and possibly they lead some men to volunteer who would not otherwise have done so. But it must be remembered that during the South African War, thousands enlisted who had never served before, and many of the best men merely joined the Auxiliary Forces for the purpose of complying with the regulations under which their employment was permitted. The results obtained from the maintenance of a great force confined to home service, though fairly satisfactory from some points of view, are certainly not such as will ever justify the creation of a large force solely for the purpose of producing a small quota of soldiers in time of war.

That the existence of the Auxiliary Forces does interfere with, and does not stimulate recruiting for the Regular Army is beyond doubt. If we are to rely upon our Regular Army alone in time of war, the interference is certainly to be regretted. If, on the other hand, we can so organise our Auxiliary Forces as to make them a true reinforcement of the Regular Army in time of war, and to ensure that their fighting efficiency shall be commensurate with the cost of their upkeep and with their numerical strength, we may then accept with equanimity the draft which they undoubtedly make upon the contingent which, but for their existence, might contribute many recruits to the Regular Army.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XVI.

1. The nation does not get full value for the soldier's pay because—

(a) Military service is still unpopular in many parts of the country.

(b) The conditions under which recruiting is conducted have not been adapted to the conditions of the time.

(c) Employment on discharge is uncertain.

(d) The conditions of the barracks, and of barrack life, are not in accordance with modern standards of comfort and decency.

(e) The Auxiliary Forces compete with the Regular Army for recruits.

2. The unpopularity of Army service has survived the reasons for it; but it exists and must be reckoned with.

3. Our recruiting methods are antiquated and capable of amendment.

4. Our recruiting depots are unattractive, and in some cases in a very bad condition.

5. The uncertainty of employment on discharge is disadvantageous to recruiting.

6. The soldier values the certainty of employment more than the chance of charity.

7. The condition of the barracks affects recruiting.

8. The conditions of barrack life are still in many instances less favourable than the conditions of life outside. This fact is detrimental to recruiting.

9. It is a fallacy to suppose that the Auxiliary Forces prove a direct assistance to the recruiting of the Regular Forces.

10. The competition of the Auxiliary Forces with the Regular Forces is not to be regretted, provided the former are as valuable in war as the latter.

CHAPTER XVII

THE WORKING OF THE LINKED-BATTALION SYSTEM

THE HISTORY OF THE LINKED-BATTALION SYSTEM.

It is obvious that if the Regular Army be divided into two parts, of which the men composing the one are enlisted for Long Service and those who compose the other for Short Service, the Short-Service battalions cannot be utilised directly for the purpose of furnishing drafts for battalions serving abroad. A short-service soldier who leaves the colours after two years cannot be employed abroad in time of peace. It is evident, therefore, that the drafts for the foreign-service army must be obtained from within that army itself. By what method can this be accomplished? At present, as far as the infantry is concerned, drafts are still furnished with much difficulty under the old linked-battalion system. It has already been made clear that, in the opinion of the author, this system cannot be maintained. That it still has supporters cannot be doubted; but there are many who disapprove of it, and many more who have expressed themselves in favour of changes which must inevitably destroy it.

Before proceeding, however, to discuss the virtues or defects of the linked-battalion system, before proceeding to inquire whether the retention of that system is compatible with the conditions under which the Army must, by universal admission,

be maintained, it will be well to state shortly, for the benefit of those readers who have not made a close study of the technical side of Army problems, what the linked-battalion system really is, how it came into existence, what were the purposes it was intended to serve, and why its continuance has become incompatible with modern development.

In the House of Commons and elsewhere, much energy has been expended in asserting or denying the excellence of the linked-battalion system. Public opinion has hitherto stood aside in a somewhat puzzled attitude, unwilling to form conclusions with regard to a subject which has always been represented as highly technical, and capable of being dealt with by expert opinion only. As a matter of fact, the issue involved is not a highly technical one; the *pros* and *cons* of the argument can be stated in a manner intelligible to the layman, and judgment may be pronounced not upon purely professional points—which indeed are not really involved—but upon broad issues which are intelligible to any clear-thinking person.

It was part of Lord Cardwell's great scheme of reform that the whole of the Infantry of the Line should be grouped in regiments, each regiment composed of two battalions.¹ To each two-battalion regiment thus formed was assigned a regimental depot at which recruits were received, and at which they were given their elementary training. Mobilisation stores were kept at the depot, which was also utilised for the assembling and training of the Militia recruits. It was an essential part of Lord Cardwell's original plan that the battalions thus linked should perform a definite and clearly defined function. In normal times one battalion

¹ The 60th Rifles and Rifle Brigade retained their four battalions; the Cameron Highlanders, in deference to its ancient regimental traditions, were left without a link, but a second battalion has since been added to this regiment.

was to serve abroad, the other was to remain at home; the home battalion was to supply drafts of trained soldiers to the foreign battalion. Lord Cardwell foresaw that circumstances would occasionally arise under which both battalions of the regiment would be abroad at the same time, and that when such an event occurred the ordinary system of supplying drafts would break down. He therefore sought to provide against this emergency by including in his scheme an arrangement for forming a third battalion whenever the two linked battalions were abroad at the same time. Unfortunately this wise arrangement was never carried into effect,¹ and no proper provision has ever been made for supplying drafts in the event of both battalions being abroad.

It is obvious that a system which depended absolutely upon the perpetual maintenance of the equality between the number of battalions abroad and at home respectively was one which was very liable to disturbance. It must be said, however, in favour of the modified Cardwell scheme that at the time of its adoption, and for some years afterwards, there was either a practical equality as between the number of battalions abroad and at home, or a preponderance of battalions at home—a condition of affairs which put no strain upon the system.

"PROVISIONAL BATTALIONS" AND "SHORT-TOUR" BATTALIONS.

As time went on, however, the conditions under which it was necessary to work the linked-battalion system underwent serious changes. Owing to a variety of causes, the number of battalions abroad exceeded the number at home, and, in order to

¹ On a single occasion an attempt was made to give effect to the plan, but it was abandoned, and has never been repeated.

meet the difficulty, various emergency measures were resorted to. "Provisional battalions"¹ were formed out of the débris of several regiments of which both battalions were serving abroad. The arrangement offended against every canon of military ethics. The association of men of different regiments under assorted officers could not be defended, and indeed never has been defended, save as a pure emergency measure. It has always been so regarded.

Another and much more mischievous expedient was, however, soon adopted. It became the custom to dispatch certain battalions on what was known as "Short Tour." A few words are necessary to explain the character of this proceeding, and the causes which led to its adoption. Owing to the distribution of the Army the essential balance between the battalions abroad and at home has been upset; more than half the battalions are required for service abroad. It is therefore evident that one or more regiments must have both battalions serving abroad. But under the linked-battalion system it is essential that one battalion must be at home in order to furnish drafts for the foreign battalion. As a matter of fact, the battalion cannot remain at home. The difficulty has therefore been met in a highly original fashion. It is not possible to keep the second battalion at home because it is necessary to send it to Malta, to Gibraltar, or to Cape Town. But it is possible to *pretend* that it is at home, and this pretence has actually been made for a long succession of years. At one time a list was regularly printed in the War Office in which the names of battalions stationed as far off as South Africa, North America, and the Mediterranean were preceded by a star referring to a note, which explained that the

¹ Vulgarly, but not inaptly, described in the service as "Rag-bag battalions."

battalions in question were to be “regarded as being within the Home District.” This process of make-believe goes on at the present time; indeed, under the actual circumstances its continuance is inevitable. A regiment has a battalion in India; its linked battalion is at Malta or Gibraltar on “Short Tour.” Being on short tour, it is officially regarded as being at home; and being “at home,” it is called upon to fulfil the ordinary duties of a home battalion, and, what is much more important, is maintained on the same footing as an ordinary home battalion.

It will be said that there is nothing objectionable about such an arrangement. It has, indeed, been officially declared that such a battalion may just as well be stationed in the Mediterranean, as at York or Colchester.

But a very brief examination will serve to show the fallacy of any such assumption. Let us see what is the real condition of the battalion in the Mediterranean, on “Short Tour.” It is a battalion of some 700 rank and file. Its duty is that of a home battalion—namely, to furnish a constant supply of drafts to the battalion in India. These drafts are taken, and indeed must be taken, from the effective nucleus of the battalion—that is to say, from a body of men numbering 250 to 300 who satisfy the requirements as to age and service.¹

But if this were all, there would perhaps be little to complain of. Unfortunately it is not all, as will be apparent if we examine for a moment the composition of one of these battalions.

The following table gives the actual composition of six battalions of infantry serving on Short Tour in July, 1906 :—

¹ The men composing an Indian draft must be over twenty years of age, must have had a certain amount of service, and must have not less than three years to serve.

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| UNIT. | Strength of Rank and File on 1st July, 1906. | Numbers under— | | |
|--|--|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | | 20 Years of Age. | 2 Years' Service. | 1 Year's Service. |
| Norfolk Regt., 2nd Batt. | 682 | 113 | 159 | 85 |
| Royal Sussex Regt., 2nd Batt. | 752 | 147 | 233 | 79 |
| Essex Regt., 2nd Batt. | 709 | 220 | 355 | 98 |
| Royal West Kent Regt., 1st Batt. | 692 | 156 | 247 | 88 |
| Royal Munster Fusiliers, 2nd Batt. | 644 | 198 | 288 | 106 |
| Rifle Brigade, 1st Batt. | 688 | 90 | 70 | — |

NOTE.—The numbers “under one year's service” are included in the “under two years' service,” and a number of those “under twenty years of age” would be included in both these categories of service.

Assuming that these battalions are required for active service, they will in each case have to leave behind all men under twenty years of age, and at least 5 per cent. of the remainder. To make the battalions up to 960 they will require respectively :

| | |
|---|-----|
| Norfolk Regiment, 2nd Battalion | 419 |
| Royal Sussex Regiment, 2nd Battalion | 385 |
| Essex Regiment, 2nd Battalion | 500 |
| Royal West Kent Regiment, 1st Battalion | 450 |
| Royal Munster Fusiliers, 2nd Battalion | 536 |
| Rifle Brigade, 1st Battalion | 391 |

If, however, there were no time to ship the useless men back to England and to send out reservists in their place, the battalions would go to the front at the following strengths:—

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| Norfolk Regiment | 531 |
| Royal Sussex Regiment. | 575 |
| Essex Regiment | 465 |
| Royal West Kent Regiment | 510 |
| Royal Munster Fusiliers | 424 |
| Rifle Brigade | 569 |

How dangerous this system is, when applied to battalions quartered in our Mediterranean fortresses, it is easy to see. These fortresses are practically

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places d'armes, from which troops are dispatched in case of emergency to any threatened point. How utterly unfit the Short-Tour battalions are to fulfil this purpose has been made apparent.

THE EQUILIBRIUM BETWEEN BATTALIONS ABROAD AND AT HOME.

It is evident, therefore, that the effective working of the linked-battalion system depends upon the maintenance of the conditions which existed at the time of its establishment—namely, an exact correspondence between the number of battalions at home and abroad, respectively. Emergency measures such as the establishment of Depot battalions, and make-believe such as is involved in the system of Short-Tour battalions, are unsatisfactory, extravagant, and, above all, incompatible with fighting efficiency.

But, if it be true that the successful working of the linked-battalion system is conditional upon the perpetual maintenance of an equilibrium between units abroad and at home, and if, at the same time, it is evident that an equilibrium cannot be maintained, clearly the linked-battalion system must be abandoned. For it can scarcely be doubted that, whatever scheme of army organisation be adopted in the future, a system of which the rigid maintenance of an equal number of battalions at home and abroad is an essential feature, is inadmissible and cannot be regarded as a satisfactory solution of our military problem.

It has, indeed, been contended in some quarters that the linked-battalion system possesses an inherent excellence as furnishing a training school, and is essentially superior to any other as a means for turning out efficient soldiers. It has been suggested that so great are these advantages, and so indissolubly are they attached to the system,

that a plan, undesirable from the point of view of organisation or economy, should be preserved by artificial aid, if necessary, on the ground of its value to the Army as a fighting machine.

This proposition has been put forward on such high authority that it demands, and will receive, special examination. An attempt will be made to show that there is no foundation whatever for the belief that the linked-battalion system is necessary to the production of good soldiers. But before dealing with this aspect of the question it will be convenient to inquire whether the conditions which are essential to the proper working of the linked-battalion system can, or ought to, continue in the future.

Is it, or is it not desirable that there should always be an equal number of units at home and abroad? There can be but one answer. It is not desirable.

In the first place there is obviously nothing essential, nothing which conforms to a general principle in such a distribution.

The number of battalions maintained abroad in time of peace depends upon policy. As the conditions which regulate policy change from year to year, and almost from day to day, the policy itself must change.

It may be right and proper to-day to maintain fifty-two battalions of Infantry in India and thirty-five in the Colonies and Egypt. To-morrow, it may be equally right and proper to increase or to diminish the number.

The number of battalions maintained at home, in time of peace, depends upon considerations totally different from those which govern the distribution of the battalions abroad.

The number at home is, or ought to be, regulated by two main considerations. In the first place, a sufficient number of units must be kept at home to allow of a circulation. It would be inexpedient,

even if it were possible, to keep British troops permanently in India, South Africa, or the Mediterranean. Moreover, if such a system were permissible in the case of the private soldiers, it would be impossible in the case of the officers and non-commissioned officers with whom the Army is the profession of a lifetime. The question of the exact proportion which the troops at home must bear to those abroad, in order to provide for this circulation, depends upon a variety of circumstances which need not be discussed here.¹

There is, however, a second and not less important consideration which regulates, or ought to regulate, the number of units maintained at home in time of peace.

The contingency of war must be provided for; and the first demand in time of war will be for an immense addition to the effectives provided for the ordinary peace garrison of the Empire. It has been demonstrated elsewhere, and the fact is, indeed, beyond dispute, that this great addition can only be secured by the creation of a large trained Reserve. The men composing this Reserve must have had a certain amount of training with the colours; but this training must be short, and it must be at home.

In whatever units these men are trained, whether they are attached for a time to the battalions destined to proceed abroad, or whether they are trained as the Militia now are, in separate units, they are, emphatically, not part of the peace garrison of the Empire, and the considerations which decide the numbers and distribution of that peace garrison ought not to affect the Reserve-making units.

¹ The point is dealt with in Chapter VI. But that, in order to provide for such circulation there must be a certain number of battalions at home in peace time, is indisputable. That these battalions must be composed of men engaged on the same terms of service as those whose places they are intended to take in India or elsewhere, is a corollary of the preceding proposition.

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It is evident, for the reasons that have just been given, that there is no essential connection between the policy which regulates the number of units required for service abroad in time of peace, and that which dictates the number of units or cadres to be maintained at home in time of peace, in preparation for the outbreak of war.

THE LINKED-BATTALION SYSTEM IS NOT ESSENTIAL TO THE SUPPLY OF DRAFTS.

It is clear, then, that we may proceed to examine the numbers and distribution of the peace garrison upon its merits, and apart from complications arising from the consideration of the War Army, and the War Reserves. Having thus freed the question from extraneous matter, we are in a position to answer the question whether the maintenance of an equilibrium between battalions at home and abroad—an equilibrium which is the condition precedent to the proper working of the linked-battalion system—is essential or desirable.

That it is *essential* can only be proved by demonstrating (1) that the supply of drafts to battalions abroad can be furnished by no other means; (2) That the policy of the Empire will always require an exact correspondence between the number of units abroad and at home.

That the drafts can be supplied by another system, namely, that of Depots as opposed to Linked Battalions, it is proposed to show. That the policy of the Empire will always require the maintenance of an equilibrium of units is a proposition which scarcely requires examination to demonstrate its absurdity. So far from the policy of the Empire requiring the maintenance of such an equilibrium, the history of the last twenty years has made it abundantly evident that such an equilibrium is never reached save by accident; that it is not

essential, but is opposed to the military interests of the Empire; and that at no period has its attainment been more distant than at the present time.

But if the system be not *essential*, it may be desirable. If it could be shown that the cause of economy and the interests of efficiency were alike served by the perpetuation of the linked-battalion system, there would certainly be a strong motive for hesitation before abandoning a plan which, however illogical, however inflexible and ill-adapted to our political needs, nevertheless saved money and gave us good soldiers.

In the following chapter some reasons will be given for the belief that not only is the linked-battalion system for the purpose of drafting not essential, but that it is exceedingly costly, and has, moreover, no military advantages to recommend it.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XVII.

1. If the Army be divided into two parts, viz., "Long-Service" and "Short-Service," the linked-battalion system cannot be relied upon to furnish drafts.

2. The linked-battalion system as designed by Lord Cardwell has never been carried into effect.

3. The successful working of the linked-battalion system for the purpose of drafting depends upon the maintenance of an equilibrium between battalions abroad and battalions at home. That equilibrium has long ceased to exist, and cannot be restored without greatly adding to the cost of the Army.

4. The attempt to make the system work by means of "Short-Tour" battalions is greatly to be deprecated.

5. It is not desirable in the interests of the Army or of economy that an equilibrium should be maintained between the battalions abroad and at home.

6. The maintenance of the linked-battalion system not only involves great expense, but produces a wholly inadequate Reserve.

7. The linked-battalion system is not essential to the provision of drafts.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE LINKED-BATTALION SYSTEM AND THE DEPOT SYSTEM COMPARED

THE "WASTE" OF A BATTALION.

WHATEVER changes may be made in the organisation of the Army, the duty of furnishing drafts for the battalions abroad will always remain to be fulfilled. A battalion which proceeds to India a thousand strong will lose a certain proportion of its men each year. The actual number will depend upon a variety of considerations. It will be affected in the first place by the term of enlistment. In a battalion in which all the men are enlisted for nine years there will be a normal exodus to the Reserve of one-ninth of the battalion in each year. But to the normal outgoing must be added the number of men who die, are invalided, or purchase their discharge during the year. Against these various losses must be set the small number of men who extend their service on promotion or otherwise. These men would in the ordinary course have passed to the Reserve, and their retention with the colours for twelve or twenty-one years affects the figures of annual loss to a slight extent.

The resultant of these various causes represents the annual waste of a battalion. It is this waste that has to be made good by drafts. How these drafts can best be furnished is, as has been indicated, a matter of controversy.

The issue practically lies between two sources of supply, the Linked Battalion and the Large Depot. It is proposed in this chapter to examine in some detail the merits of the two systems.

It will be well to state exactly what it is that is required from the source of supply, and this can be most conveniently illustrated by the use of an example.

The following figures give the average waste of a battalion serving in India under the seven-years' system :—

Waste due to—

| | |
|--|-------|
| Death | 15 |
| Invaliding | 30 |
| Miscellaneous, prisoners, etc. | 12 |
| To Army Reserve | 103 |
| Time expired | 5 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 165 |
| | <hr/> |

THE REDUCTION OF “WASTE.”

The figures are representative; that is to say they fairly represent the ordinary average under the conditions stated.

There is, however, no reason why they should not be reduced.

Every year added to the period of enlistment obviously diminishes the normal annual waste. In a battalion enlisted for seven years, the normal waste is one-seventh of the whole. An extension of the term of enlistment to nine years reduces the figure to one-ninth. The recent introduction of a nine-years' period of enlistment must, therefore, tend to diminish the rate of waste in battalions serving abroad.

Another influence is acting in the same direction. The great improvement in the health of the troops is beginning to tell its tale, and there is every

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reason to hope that the rates of mortality and invaliding will continue to diminish.¹

All these causes combined must inevitably reduce the waste, and diminish the demand for drafts. One hundred and sixty-five will cease to be an average figure. What the actual average may ultimately come down to it is impossible to forecast with absolute accuracy, but it may safely be said that the annual draft for a battalion of 960 men serving in India on a nine-years' engagement ought not to exceed 135.²

COLONIAL DRAFTS—THE QUESTION OF AGE.

The drafts for Colonial battalions will necessarily be smaller. The establishment of these battalions is 760 as compared with 960 in India, and the invaliding rate is somewhat less. It would probably be safe to calculate the necessary draft for a Colonial battalion of 760 men at 110.

It must not be forgotten, however, that the question of draft-supply is not one of numbers only. The men composing an Indian draft must be twenty years of age, and ought to have at least four years to serve. The same rule should apply to battalions in the Colonies, but as has already been pointed out, the illegitimate use of the "Short-Tour" system has resulted in the dispatch of thousands of young men to the Colonies who are under twenty years of age and who have less than one year to serve.³

¹ The statistics of health of the Indian Army for 1904 recently published, confirm this sanguine view. Under one item alone, viz., admissions to hospital for malaria, the decrease in admissions may be said to have added 2,000 men to the strength of the white Army in India. The figures for 1905 show a further improvement.

² It will probably be considerably less.

³ Owing to the introduction of universal three years' enlistment, it became necessary to dispatch thousands of young soldiers to India and the Colonies who had less than eighteen months to serve with the colours. This unfortunate practice will cease when the whole of the three-years men have passed into the Reserve or extended.

There can be no doubt that under a proper system the Colonial drafts ought to satisfy the same conditions as to age and service as are required in the case of the drafts for India.

The explanation which has just been given will suffice to show what the real nature of the draft problem is. It may be stated as follows :—

THE PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED.

To furnish annually sufficient men of twenty years of age and with four years to serve to make up the waste of the Infantry in—

- (a) India ;
- (b) The Colonies and Egypt.

Assuming the drafts required to be 135 per battalion for India, and 110 per battalion for the Colonies, the figures are as follows :—

BATTALION DRAFTS.

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| India | $52 \times 135 = 7,020$ men. |
| Colonies | $35 \times 110 = 3,850$ men. |

These 10,870 men can be supplied from one of two sources—from *Linked Battalions*, or from *Large Depots*.

LINKED BATTALIONS AS DRAFT-PRODUCERS.

Let us first examine the linked battalion which is the existing source of supply. What is the machinery which is considered necessary to furnish the annual contingent of 10,870 men ?

Let us take a concrete example.

The Blankshire Regiment has two battalions, the 1st Battalion is in India, and has an establishment of 960 rank and file. It requires an annual draft of 135 men. The 2nd Battalion is at home. It has an establishment of one lieutenant-colonel, two majors, eight captains, eight subalterns, and an establishment of 750 men.

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It occupies a large barrack at Aldershot, or elsewhere. It has its band and drums, and all the paraphernalia appropriate to a real regiment. But in addition to the battalion there is also the Regimental Depot. This is a large establishment in or in the neighbourhood of a provincial town. It covers in some cases eight or ten acres of ground; it has a permanent establishment of 68 men, with a number of recruits varying from 70 to 100. It is maintained primarily for the purpose of collecting and forwarding recruits to the two Line battalions, but it has also certain functions in connection with mobilisation and the training of Militia recruits. To this depot the recruits for the Line Regiment are sent on enlistment; and here they go through a three months' preliminary drill before joining the battalion.

The depot, as a rule, is a forlorn spot. The numbers under instruction vary from day to day; the boys are necessarily in various stages of training. Side by side with the Line recruits are the Militia recruits, who are usually drilled in another part of the same barrack-yard, and who, under constant pressure from the non-commissioned officers, are daily passing over from their own squad and joining that of their somewhat more favoured companions. It would be an exaggeration to say that the staff of these little depots is representative of all that is best among the commissioned and non-commissioned ranks of the Army. There is indeed a natural tendency to relegate to these depressing and ill-equipped institutions officers and non-commissioned officers who are not specially required at the headquarters of their regiments. There are many exceptions to this rule, but the tendency is a natural one, and cannot always be resisted.

After three months' preliminary instruction in the regimental depot the recruit is passed on to

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the home battalion, where he is fitted in as well as circumstances permit into the daily life of the battalion. How ill he often fits, and how difficult it is to deal with a battalion in a constant state of flux, those who are acquainted with the condition of many of the Infantry units at home are well aware.

Having now joined the home battalion the recruit remains in it for a period which varies from six months to two years. The date of his dispatch on draft depends upon a number of circumstances which cannot be calculated in advance with any certainty—the age of the individual recruit, the date of his enlistment, and the length of his engagement, the station of the 1st Battalion, its strength, and its invaliding rate all affect the calculation.¹

Twice in the year the battalion is called upon for a draft, and when the second draft has been dispatched the remainder is often a thing of shreds and patches, a mere simulacrum of a fighting unit.

WAR EFFICIENCY OF THE LINKED-BATTALION SYSTEM.

It has been suggested in defence of this elaborate method of supplying drafts that the home battalion with its depot "contrives a double debt to pay," and that, in addition to furnishing the drafts, it provides a fighting battalion in case of war. In a sense this is true, but, as will be seen, the price paid for the article is extraordinarily high, and the article produced is scarcely worth the expenditure.

Let us take the case of a battalion at home which has dispatched its drafts, and which is called upon during the next two or three months to take

¹ As has been pointed out, if the battalion is in the Colonies the recruit may be dispatched within a few months after joining the home battalion.

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the field. Here are the figures which show the composition of such a battalion :

| | |
|--|-------|
| Strength of battalion | 750 |
| Less men under 20 years of age | 240 |
| „ draft | 165 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 405 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 345 |
| Deduct 5 % sick and other casualties | 17 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 328 |
| Required to fill up to war strength | 632 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 960 |
| | <hr/> |

To enable the battalion to take the field, it must draw 632 men from the Reserve. Then, and not till then, will it be fit for war. If by such a process alone drafts could be furnished and battalions be prepared for the field, this costly and elaborate process would be inevitable, however undesirable. But that the system is not necessary for either purpose is certain, as will shortly be shown.

COST OF THE LINKED-BATTALION SYSTEM.

Meanwhile it must be clearly understood that in order to furnish an annual draft which ought not to exceed 135 men the Linked-Battalion system imposes upon the country the upkeep of an Infantry Barrack, a Depot, a full staff of officers, band, drums, depot staff, and rank and file, some eight or nine hundred men in all, of whom some six or seven hundred are altogether superfluous as far as the furnishing of drafts is concerned.

LARGE DEPOTS.

Is there an alternative to this apparently costly system? It has already been pointed out that there is an alternative, and that it is to be found in the adoption of the *Large Depot* for the training of recruits. Three examples of large depots for

the training of infantry recruits already exist, namely, Walmer (Royal Marines), Caterham (Brigade of Guards), Winchester (60th Rifles and Rifle Brigade).

In each of these a large number of recruits are always under training, at Winchester for three months, at Caterham for three months, and at Walmer for eight months.

The Winchester Depot supplies eight battalions, that at Caterham ten battalions, and the Walmer Depot the whole of the Royal Marine Light Infantry, 20,000 in number.

The cheapest, and in many respects the best of the three, is the Walmer Depot. The establishment is on a large scale, the appliances of all kinds are ample, and the staff is carefully selected for the special work with which its members are charged. The excellence of the staff, however, is scarcely less noticeable at Winchester and Caterham. It is natural that this should be so, for it is easy to select the best officers for such highly important work, whereas selection for an ordinary Line Infantry Depot is rarely regarded as promotion.

The training of recruits is a great art, and requires highly qualified officers and non-commissioned officers for its performance. Such officers are, as a rule, selected for the depots that have been mentioned, and the admirable result of their work is apparent to any one who visits the scene of their labours. That large depots providing for the wants of several battalions can be maintained, and can be so conducted as to turn out an exceedingly good type of soldier is apparent. No one who has ever had the opportunity of comparing the atmosphere and routine of the three depots referred to with those of the ordinary regimental depot can have any doubt as to the immense superiority of the former. It is, indeed, inevitable that there should be such a superiority. Concentration, specialisation, method,

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and a lively and interesting course of instruction are the conditions of success in military as in all other education.

But it is not sufficient for the present purpose to prove that large depots can be maintained with advantage as regards the actual training of the recruits. It is necessary for the argument to show that such depots can and ought to be made the source of supply for battalions serving abroad.

NUMBERS REQUIRED UNDER THE DEPOT SYSTEM.

We have seen that the average waste of a battalion of 960 men enlisted for nine years and serving in India ought to be about 135, and of a similar battalion of 760 serving in the Colonies, 110. Under the Linked-Battalion system it is necessary, as we know, to maintain a double establishment consisting of barracks and depot and a force of some 880 to 900 men. What is the number required if a Depot be substituted for the Linked Battalion, and if recruits are transferred direct from such depot to the battalion in which it is intended they shall serve? The answer obviously depends upon the duration of the depot service. If the period of service at the depot be three months only, the actual arithmetical result is that one-fourth of the annual draft must be at the depot at one time. This number four times renewed will furnish the year's recruits. In other words, the number absolutely required at the depot at any given time in order to furnish the draft for the Indian battalion will be 34; for the Colonial battalion, 28.

THE AGE DIFFICULTY AND ITS SOLUTION.

It must not be supposed, however, that in practice this very small number of men would suffice to meet the full demands of the battalion.

Various factors unite to disturb the calculation made above. The drafts are not all dispatched at equal intervals throughout the year. The Indian draft season is limited to the period between October and March. Waste must be taken into consideration, and, above all, the question of age must be considered and allowed for.

If the depot were to be used merely for the supply of drafts to a battalion at home, the figures given above would require very little modification, and 34 men renewed four times in the year would, with some additions for waste, serve to keep up a battalion of 960 men. The Royal Marine Depot is practically in this position, for the recruits go to their respective Divisions as soon as they have finished the prescribed course.

But it would be impossible to assimilate the practice of the Army to that of the Marines. The rule which forbids the dispatch of men under twenty years of age to India is a wise one, based on much experience, and not to be lightly set aside. That it is incapable of modification need not be asserted. High authorities have already been found to contend that the improvement in sanitary conditions in India and the multiplication of Hill Stations would justify the Army Council in sending young men of nineteen and a half or even of nineteen years of age to India. If it be decided to take this step, the age difficulty practically vanishes. But even if the present rule be maintained, and if no soldiers are allowed to serve in India who have not reached the full age of twenty, the difficulty may still be surmounted.

It has been shown that the true annual infantry draft for India ought to be about 7,000 men. It is conceded that these men ought to be twenty years of age when they reach their destination. But Infantry recruits are taken, and are rightly taken, at the age of eighteen. A boy enlisted at that age

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and sent direct to the depot will emerge from the depot at the age of eighteen years and three months, and twenty-one months must elapse before he is qualified for Indian service. This difficulty is at present met by the Linked-Battalion system. The boy on leaving the regimental depot is sent to the home battalion, whence he is transferred, on reaching the prescribed age, to the Indian battalion.

But the difficulty is more apparent than real. It is true that a limited number of recruits join at the exact age of eighteen, but the vast majority are over that age. In 1904¹ the number of recruits who were nineteen years of age and upwards on enlistment was 21,488. This total is sufficient to meet the whole of the Indian requirements.² If, however, the period of training at the depot be extended from three to six months, the problem is still further simplified. Such an extension, it must be remembered, involves no additional cost. The cost of upkeep of a recruit in a depot is less than that of a soldier in a battalion. If, therefore, the six-months' term be adopted, all recruits who are nineteen years and three months old on enlistment will be available for Indian drafts.³

HOME AND COLONIAL DRAFTS.

The question of the supply of drafts for the Colonial battalions presents few difficulties. It is desirable, but it is not absolutely essential, that a

¹ The last year in which Short-Service enlistment for the Infantry was open.

² These figures must not be regarded as being more than approximately correct; the actual calculation is a complicated one. The fact that Indian drafts can only be dispatched during a portion of the year has to be taken into account. Making all allowances, however, for this and other disturbing causes, the fact remains that if it be desired to furnish the Indian drafts from depots, that object can be achieved.

³ It is assumed that three months are allowed for passage to India and establishment in the new station, and for the margin which is always permissible where the dates run very close. If and when the strict rule with regard to age is modified in the case of Indian service, a very much larger number of recruits would at once become available.

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strict age limit should be imposed, and the great majority of the recruits in a depot will always be fit for dispatch to a battalion in South Africa or the Mediterranean after six months' training in the depot.

To the battalions at home the recruits can, of course, be sent at any time. In their case a three-months' training will doubtless suffice, and the adoption of this short period for these men will tend to reduce the size, and consequently the cost, of the entire depot.

It will be seen therefore that, while the establishment of large depots is favourable to the training of recruits and immensely reduces the cost of the Army, it is not incompatible with the regular dispatch of recruits of full age to India.

THE ARGUMENT AGAINST DEPOT TRAINING EXAMINED.

So far, therefore, the argument seems to be overwhelmingly in favour of the system of Large Depots, as opposed to that of Linked Battalions. But before this conclusion is accepted, it is necessary to examine a plea which has been made on behalf of the Linked-Battalion system which merits most respectful attention on account of the high authority of those who have been made responsible for it.

Speaking on the question of the respective merits of the Depot system and the Linked-Battalion system, the Secretary of State for War informed the House of Commons¹ that both Lord Roberts and Sir Evelyn Wood approved of the linked battalions, and had given their opinions to the effect that "a depot was not to be compared to a battalion in the matter of producing trained troops for service abroad."

¹ 15th March, 1906.

A system which is sponsored by Lord Roberts and Sir Evelyn Wood would at first sight seem to be beyond criticism. If these two distinguished soldiers, after long and full experience, had come to the conclusion that the soldier trained under the Linked-Battalion system was a better product and more serviceable for war than the soldier trained in a large depot, it would, indeed, savour of presumption to question such a judgment from such an authority.

But a little consideration will suffice to show that there must be a confusion at some stage in the process which led to the Secretary of State's pronouncement.

In order that Lord Roberts or Sir Evelyn Wood should be able to pronounce a final and irrefutable judgment upon the value of the respective types of recruits, it is obviously necessary that they should have had experience of both, and, as the result of that experience, should have decided in favour of one. But it is a simple matter of fact that neither of the officers in question ever has enjoyed this opportunity.

For thirty-five years no Line-Infantry soldiers have been trained otherwise than under the Linked-Battalion system. Prior to 1870, no soldier was trained under the Depot system which it is proposed to establish.

This general statement requires, perhaps, one slight modification. For many years past the Royal Marines have been trained at a large depot and transferred thence to their divisions. The Marines belong to the Navy, and Lord Roberts and Sir Evelyn Wood may not have taken them into consideration when speaking of the Army. Such was probably the case, for even the most ardent admirer of our existing military system would hardly question the excellence of the rank and file of the Marines, or suggest that in peace

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or war they show any marked inferiority to the average Line battalions.

But apart from the Marines, there are no British Infantry soldiers who have been trained under the proposed system, and there never have been.¹ Fifty years ago, it is true, there were a certain number of four-company battalions known as "depot battalions," which dragged out an obscure and undistinguished existence in certain remote stations. They were the worst developments of a faulty system. They were done away with, as they deserved to be; but they bore not the slightest resemblance in composition, duties, or objects to the Walmer Depot or to the Infantry depots which it is proposed to establish in lieu of the linked battalions. It is clear, therefore, that the unfavourable judgment which, we are told, has been pronounced upon the depot-trained soldier is not, and cannot be based upon experience.

THE "DEPOT-TRAINED SOLDIER."

It is evident from the expressions used by those who champion the Linked-Battalion system that the point to which they attach the greatest importance is the fact that the soldier has received his training *in a battalion*, and not in a *mixed depot*.

This view, which has often found expression, is really based upon a confusion of thought. Every Infantry soldier at the present time is trained in a depot, and goes thence to a battalion. Precisely the same thing will happen under the Depot system, subject to these two important differences: the depot will be a good one instead of a bad one, and the battalion to which he goes will be his own. Few people realise that, for the great majority of Infantry recruits, the battalion to which he goes

¹ The depots at Caterham and Winchester are similar to but not identical with the depots proposed.

after leaving the regimental depot is merely a stage unnecessarily interpolated in his military career. He remains with the battalion for a space of time varying from a few weeks to eighteen months, and every year the tendency is in the direction of shortening the average period. Scarcely has he begun to know his officers and his comrades, than he is dispatched to the other end of the world, where he at length finds his real haven—the battalion with which he is to serve for seven or eight years, with which he is to fight, and from which he will take his discharge.¹

It will be seen, therefore, that while there has, hitherto, been no opportunity of comparing the product of the linked battalion with that of the large depot, as it is proposed to establish it, there are strong *prima facie* reasons for believing that the latter will certainly not be inferior to the former in training or in fighting efficiency.

It is, indeed, somewhat singular that any doubt should have been thrown upon the value of large depots as schools of instruction and training, for it is no exaggeration to say that the best fighting material at the disposal of the nation is produced, almost without exception, by such institutions.

The seamen of the Navy are trained together as boys in large depots. The stokers, the men of the best physique and the best conducted in the Navy, are trained in depots; so are the Royal Marine Artillery and the Royal Marine Light Infantry. The Guards are trained in a large depot which supplies four separate regiments, and ten battalions. The 60th Rifles and Rifle Brigade are supplied from an eight-battalion depot. The Royal Artillery, the Royal Engineers, and the Army Service Corps are in the same position.

¹ The greater the disproportion between the number of troops abroad and at home—in other words, the greater the reduction at home—the shorter will be the average term of service for the recruit in the home battalion.

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In accordance with the unanimous recommendation of a very strong Committee, the Large-Depot system is to be applied to the whole of the Cavalry. The Infantry of the Line alone are still compelled to go through the unsatisfactory stage of three months' training in an ill-equipped, ill-manned depot from which all the conditions which continue to make such places as Walmer and Caterham valuable must perforce be absent.¹

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XVIII.

1. The "waste" of a battalion is dependent upon—
 - (a) Length of service;
 - (b) The amount of mortality and invaliding;
 - (c) The amount of promotion and extension.
 2. The average annual waste of a seven-years' battalion in India has hitherto been 165.
 3. The rate of waste may be reduced.
 4. The question of drafts is complicated by age requirements.
 5. The true draft requirements for India, and the Colonies and Egypt are respectively 7,020 and 3,850 (Infantry only).
 6. Drafts may be furnished by a small depot and a linked battalion, or by a large depot.
 7. The linked battalion and depot involve a personnel of 880 to 900 men.
- The large depot requires a much smaller personnel per battalion.
8. The contention that the recruit furnished by the Linked-Battalion system is more efficient than the recruit furnished by a large depot is based on a fallacy.
 9. The Linked-Battalion system is necessarily much more expensive than the Large-Depot system.

¹ It is sometimes suggested that it is impossible, with due regard to the interests of the Service, to combine the recruits of various regiments for purposes of common instruction. The facts cited above are enough to show that this difficulty does not exist in the Guards or in the Artillery; nor, as a matter of fact, does it exist in the Infantry. The instruction given at Newcastle is certainly not inferior to that given at Oxford, although at Newcastle there is a joint depot of the four battalions of the Northumberland Fusiliers and the two battalions of the Durham Light Infantry; whereas the little depot at Oxford serves the two battalions of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry only. The double depot at Lichfield is one of the best, not one of the worst.

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10. The soldier can be better trained in a large depot than in a small one.

11. The question of age need not interfere with the substitution of large depots for linked battalions and small depots.

The number of Infantry recruits enlisted at nineteen years of age and upwards is sufficient to furnish the Indian drafts.

12. The age difficulty is slight in the case of Colonial drafts, and does not exist in the case of battalions at home.

13. There is no foundation for the argument that recruits trained in a large depot are inefficient. The best men in both services are trained in such depots.

CHAPTER XIX

THE MILITIA: PART I

THE MILITIA REPRESENTS THE OLD TERRITORIAL ARMY.

THE Militia represents the oldest organised force in the country. It is not indeed the ancient territorial force which went by that name, and was levied under the ballot in various counties, but is constituted under comparatively recent statutes. The power still exists of enforcing the ballot, but the troops which would be raised by that means would serve under conditions differing in many respects from those which attach to the Militia as we know it. The Militia, however, is undoubtedly the representative in title of the old constitutional force of this country, and as such has obtained an important and honourable place among our national institutions. With such a famous record, and with such a distinguished position, the Militia would seem specially designated to furnish that Territorial Army or Army of Reserve which by common agreement is now regarded as essential; and there can be little doubt that the popular instinct in this matter is correct.

THE MILITIA SHOULD FORM THE BASIS OF THE MODERN TERRITORIAL ARMY.

It is on the basis of the Militia that the Territorial Army should be formed, and the Militia should furnish material for that Army either in whole or in part.

THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE MILITIA.

A very brief examination of the Militia as it is will, however, suffice to show that whatever may be the rôle which the force is destined ultimately to play, it is not at present and under existing conditions qualified to undertake any serious military duties, or to fill the gap in our military arrangements which is now generally admitted to exist.

The condition of the Militia is indeed lamentable. Of this there can be no doubt whatever. But there are probably few persons who realise how serious its condition actually is. The following figures serve to throw a lurid light upon the state of the Militia. In 1904 the establishment was 132,446, the strength was 93,549 ; and the deficiency consequently no less than 38,897.

The net waste of the Militia in the year was 43 per cent. of the entire force.

During the year 35,264 men entered the Militia, and 38,551 men went out of it.

Twenty-five per cent. of the entire force joined the Regular Army, deserted, or were absent during the year.

Of the recruits for the Militia 25,907, or 73 per cent., were under twenty years of age. No less than 12,168 were under eighteen years of age.

Of the Infantry Militia, including non-commissioned officers and men of the permanent staff, 23,715, or 32 per cent., were under twenty years of age. Of the Infantry Militia 29,272, or 42 per cent., had less than two years' service.

As appears from the figures given above, there was a net loss of 3,287 men during the twelve months. One-quarter of the whole force joined the Army, deserted, or were absent. While 35,264 recruits joined, 15,000 men went out of the Militia

COUNTING MEN TWICE OVER 191

into the Army, and over 12,000 were disqualified by age from going into the Army.

The state of things has got worse, and not better since 1904.

In 1905 the Militia was 39,736 below establishment, and the total strength was only 92,672, of whom 4,463 belonged to the permanent staff. It is evident, therefore, that the Militia as a fighting force can hardly be said to exist.

OFFICIAL RETURNS AND THE MILITIA.

It should be clearly understood, moreover, that discouraging as are the figures which appear in the Annual Return of the Army, they do not represent the whole or the worst of the case. It is not as well known as it ought to be that the figures relating to the Militia, which are published in the Annual Return, are to all intents and purposes a fraud. They are published for the ostensible purposes of giving information to the public with respect to the condition of the Army for which it pays. As a matter of fact, they do not give this information, but to any one who is not specially expert in their interpretation they convey an impression which is the exact reverse of the truth. At page 2 of the Annual Return¹ is to be found a statement of the numbers of the Militia, and in calculating the total of the armed forces of the Crown it is usual, and indeed natural, to add this number to the total of the Regular Army. But any one who does so will commit a grievous error. As a matter of fact, many thousands of the boys who figure as militiamen on page 2, figure again as soldiers of the Line on the very same page. There are thousands of boys who are recruited at the various depots as militiamen, who never see a Militia officer, never go to a Militia training, and

¹ Return for 1904.

never see a Militia battalion. Every year thousands of so-called militiamen pass from the Militia to the Regular Army before they have left the regimental depot. These boys have for the most part intended from the beginning to go into the Army, and it has been perfectly well known to the recruiting officer that such was their intention; and yet the farce of enlisting them twice over is solemnly gone through,¹ with the result that in some depots as many as 70 per cent. of the Militia recruits are passed on to the Line within three months of their entry. Every one of these is counted twice over in our returns, and 100 recruits figure as 170 soldiers in the documents presented to the public.

THE LAW AND THE MILITIA.

We have seen that the Militia as a whole is greatly below its establishment; that, as regards its personnel, it is in a perpetual state of flux, and that a large number of the soldiers who nominally compose it, in reality belong to another branch of the Army. To these shortcomings must be added yet another, which is due to the irregularity in the composition of the various units. In order to understand the disadvantage arising from this irregular distribution it is necessary to bear in mind the law under which the Militia exists. At the present time no man can be transferred without his consent from one Militia battalion to another, and even with such consent, he can only be transferred to another battalion forming part of the same "corps" as that in which he has enlisted. Even with consent, the militiaman cannot be transferred from one battalion to another unless the battalions form part

¹ It is noteworthy that if a boy be passed into the Militia and subsequently into the Army, two bounties are payable in respect of him to the recruiting officer; whereas, if he be enlisted directly into the Army, the recruiter has to be content with a single bounty.

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of the same corps. It is easy to understand and to sympathise with the motives which led to the adoption of this strict rule. But its existence is undoubtedly detrimental to the welfare of the Militia. There are cases in which two neighbouring battalions would gain greatly by amalgamation, but such amalgamation is impossible under the law. The whole of the men must, in fact, be discharged from one battalion and re-enlisted before they enter the other.¹

It is not necessary to dwell further upon this point, but it has been referred to in order to explain why it is that the deficiency of one unit cannot be made good from the superfluity of another, or why, without very special measures, it is impossible to amalgamate weak units for their mutual advantage. The result is undoubtedly most unfortunate. The ordinary strength of a battalion in the field in war time is from 900 to 1,000 men, and in order to maintain this force a large reserve is necessary. No Militia battalion could take the field 900 strong; no Militia battalion has any reserve. The strength of the unit varies from 150 to over a thousand.

It is sufficient to say that the strength varies from over 1,000 men to under 200. Any one who is acquainted with the local conditions with respect to the various battalions is aware that in many cases there is little chance of raising the weak battalions to a satisfactory strength. The only method by which any uniformity in the strength of units can be arrived at is by amalgamation and grouping; a process which, though very necessary, will undoubtedly meet with much resistance in the first instance, and which will demand great tact and patience on the part of those who are called upon to undertake it.

¹ It may be mentioned incidentally that the men so discharged could in all probability claim a bounty in respect of their discharge.

THE WANT OF ORGANISATION FOR WAR.

But if the condition of the Militia in respect of its numbers and personnel is unsatisfactory, little comfort can be deduced from an examination of its organisation and training. Practically speaking, the Militia has no organisation in the sense in which that word is understood in connection with modern armies. No definite function is assigned to it; by law it is confined to service in the United Kingdom; in practice it can usually be relied upon for service outside the United Kingdom. It is unprovided with artillery, or with any of the adjuncts of a modern army. It still figures as an item of nearly 100,000 men in the military establishment of the country, but it is doubtful whether it represents a third of that number if we reckon as of value only that portion of the force which can be relied upon to take the field against a serious enemy.

We have seen that the Militia is in a state of perpetual flux; that in a single year 38,551 men, or more than 40 per cent. of the entire force serving, left the colours. It must be difficult to create an efficient force under any terms of service as long as it is subject to this law of perpetual change. But the difficulty is greatly enhanced when we come to consider what is the amount of training which the militiaman obtains during his brief and uncertain connection with his battalion. In theory an ordinary militiaman is supposed to receive forty-nine days' training on enlistment and twenty-eight days' at each successive training, or roughly speaking three months in his first year of service, and one month in every subsequent year. It has been laid down by many competent authorities that two years is the minimum of training required to make an effective soldier from the material which we obtain for the Regular Army. It is not

intended to discuss the correctness of this opinion in this chapter, but it may be observed that two years is the minimum period approved in most foreign armies. If, however, we assume that a period of two years' training is reasonable and necessary, it is impossible not to note how far the training of the militiaman falls short of that ideal. Assuming that the recruit attends his annual training in the same year as that in which he enlists, he must serve for no less than seventeen years to obtain the equivalent of the two years which it has been suggested are necessary for the formation of an Infantry soldier. It will be easily understood how little chance there is of any substantial number of men completing seventeen years' service in a force which gives up 40 per cent. of its strength each year.

THE NORFOLK COMMISSION ON THE MILITIA.

It may be said that this view of the condition of the Militia is unduly pessimistic. Unfortunately there is reason to believe that the opinion here expressed is shared by those who have the closest experience of the force, and who have had the best opportunities of inquiring into its condition. The verdict of the Duke of Norfolk's Commission is emphatic. "The Militia," says the Commission, "in its existing condition is unfit to take the field for the defence of this country"; and when it is remembered that the Militia exists for no other purpose, and that its cost is nearly two millions a year, it would be hard to find a more serious or a more sweeping condemnation.

In another paragraph the Commissioners state that "the training of the Militia officer is inadequate to enable him properly to lead troops, and especially incompletely trained troops"; and this last pronouncement, scarcely less sweeping and serious

than the preceding one, leads us by a natural transition to the all-important question of the officers of the Militia.

THE QUESTION OF OFFICERS.

Enough has been said to show that the condition of the Militia is unsatisfactory as regards the rank and file. But even more serious than the condition of the rank and file is that of the officers. It is essential to a clear comprehension of the Militia question that the condition of the force with regard to the position of its officers should be clearly understood. There is much misapprehension on this subject; it will be well, therefore, to state the facts clearly.

There is a great and growing deficiency of officers in the Militia. The shortage is not equal in all the units. Some battalions and some companies have their full complement; others are lamentably short, so short that to send them into action would be to risk a disaster. The following table shows the shortage of Militia officers in 1904:—

DEFICIENCY OF OFFICERS OF THE MILITIA (INFANTRY) 1904.

| | |
|--|----|
| ¹ Battalions having 15 combatant officers . . | 14 |
| " " 14 " " . . | 14 |
| " " 13 " " . . | 10 |
| " " 12 " " . . | 7 |
| " " 11 " " . . | 6 |
| " " 10 " " . . | 2 |
| " " 9 " " . . | 3 |
| " " 8 " " . . | 1 |
| <hr/> | |
| Total of battalions having 15 officers or less . | 57 |
| <hr/> | |

But to say that there is a shortage of officers is but to state half the case. A very large number of the officers serving in the Militia are not Militia officers at all. The officers may be divided into

¹ The full complement for a battalion is from thirty to thirty-five.

four categories. In the first place there are those who have just been referred to, who are not really officers of the Militia at all. These are the subalterns who are passing through the Militia into the Line, and who only regard the battalion to which they are attached as a temporary resting-place to be quitted at the very earliest opportunity. There are battalions in which seven out of eight subalterns come under this description. There are others in which the proportion would be as high if some of those who hold commissions as subalterns in the Militia had been able to satisfy the requirements of the Army Examiners. There is scarcely a battalion in which some of the subalterns are not birds of passage.

The second category is composed of officers who for some reason or other have failed to obtain commissions in the Line, but whose inclination is towards a military career, and who would have devoted their lives to soldiering had they been able. Among them are to be found officers who have failed to pass the Army examination: officers whose age precludes them from entering the Regular Army, or makes all chance of promotion in it out of the question.

Many of these officers spend a somewhat strange life endeavouring to eke out the year by transferring their activities from one unit to another, and from one school of instruction to another. Many of them succeed to a remarkable extent in realising their ambition—a laudable one in itself. They train with various battalions; they attend a variety of classes; they become attached for considerable periods to Line regiments, and thus become in a sense regular officers, or at any rate officers serving continuously. The method has some advantages, but its disadvantages are great and obvious.

Thirdly there is a considerable number of officers

who have served in the Regular Army, and who have left it for one reason or another before reaching a high rank. These officers are for the most part to be found among the captains. Their experience and value in the Militia varies greatly according to the character and ability of the individual. In some cases they are a useful addition; in others they have a negative value.

Lastly there is a class which represents the true Militia officer, who, in theory, is the natural leader of the force. This class consists of gentlemen of means and position of some status in town or county, who give one month a year to soldiering with the county regiment. Some of the best officers of the Militia are to be found in this class, but it contains also a certain number of officers, principally of field rank, whose military qualifications leave much to be desired.

It will be observed from the above enumeration that the officers contained in the first and second categories are necessarily anxious to devote more time to service in the Militia than the conditions of the force permit—they desire, in fact, to make soldiering a profession—and regard the period of training—a month in each year—as too short.

Officers in the third category are for the most part in the same position. They have as a rule, learnt only one profession; and they are anxious to continue to practise it. During their actual period of service with their Militia battalions they receive the emoluments which they can no longer earn in the Army. To the majority of these officers, therefore, an extension of the month of training would be welcome.

Lastly there are the officers comprised in the fourth category, the real Militia officers of the old type. To them, it is obvious, a short period of training is essential; and those who talk glibly of six months' training on enlistment, and six weeks'

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annual training, entirely forget the position in which these officers are placed. Many a man will consent to be a soldier for a month and a civilian for eleven months in each year. Such a division is compatible with the continuance of his civil occupations. But what man will devote six months to soldiering and six months to civil pursuits? He must perforce be neither a soldier nor a civilian; he must needs fail in both capacities, and he will be an incubus equally to the business he neglects, and to the regiment which he is unable to serve.

If the foregoing analysis be correct, it is evident that the problem of securing sufficient and efficient officers for the Militia is not likely to be solved so long as the present system continues in force.

It is obvious that before a real improvement can take place, service in the commissioned ranks of the Militia must become either more or less of a profession for the officer than it is at present. A young man who is willing to devote himself to a military career should be able to find in Militia service the fulfilment of his ambition. At present he has no such opportunity. Either he takes his commission with the sole object of giving it up as soon as possible, and getting into the Line as quickly as may be; or else, prevented by age or want of education from quitting his regiment, he endeavours, by a series of manœuvres and by a clever manipulation of the regulations, to prolong his temporary service for as many months in the year as he is able.

It would undoubtedly be an advantage to the Army—and the Militia is part of the Army—if the number of professional officers could be increased. Every soldier knows that in time of war it is the deficiency of trained officers that will be felt much more than any deficiency of men. It is therefore a good thing that the Militia should contain a large

percentage of officers who are willing to devote their lives to the study and practice of their profession. It is obvious, however, that the terms on which the quasi-regular officers are now obtained, and the conditions under which they are permitted to serve, are most unsatisfactory, and must be regarded as a makeshift and an anomaly. It is greatly to be desired that there should be officers of experience in the Militia, but it is not to be desired that these officers should be compelled to gain their experience by resort to irregular processes, and by manipulating rather than by observing the regulations. Those who seek the welfare of the Militia are bound to provide a remedy.

But if the country would gain by an addition to the number of trained professional officers, it would also gain greatly by an increase in the number of true Militia officers, gentlemen of means who, while ready to learn something of the business of an officer and ready at all times to serve in the event of war, are unable to give up their ordinary avocations in peace time for more than a month in each year. There are numbers of such men already serving, and many more would come forward if soldiering in the Militia were as attractive as it might easily be made. Too great a burden must not be laid upon them, and all idea of calling them out for six or seven months every year must be abandoned. In a word, we must recognise facts. There are, and always will be, two classes of officers in the Militia: the class which can give, and desires to give, more than is now asked for; and the class which cannot give more than Militia service under the old conditions demanded.

If the problem is to be solved, we must provide for both classes. At present, in the endeavour to make one rule apply to both, we fail to get the best value out of either. In a subsequent chapter

we shall show in what way the division can be made; but before discussing this and other remedies appropriate to the malady from which the Militia is suffering, it is necessary to make a further diagnosis of that malady with a view to showing that the disease goes deep, and that the cure to be effective must be radical. It must not be forgotten, however, that a radical cure may often be a painless one, and may be effected more surely by taking advantage of natural processes, than by resort to heroic surgery. It is a cure of this benignant kind that is suggested in the present case.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XIX.

1. The Militia is the representative of the old Territorial Army of the country, and it is to the Militia that we should look to furnish us with the basis of a Territorial Army in the present day.

2. The condition of the Militia is such that, under present conditions, it cannot be utilised as an effective Territorial Army.

3. The condition of the Militia is very bad, and is getting worse.

4. The Returns purporting to give the strength of the Militia are false and misleading.

5. The law which forbids the transfer of militiamen from one unit to another is detrimental to the value of the force as a whole.

6. The Militia is at present without any organisation for war, and has no serious military value. The report of the Duke of Norfolk's Commission confirms this view.

7. The condition of the Militia with respect to the number and quality of its officers is even more serious than with respect to the rank and file.

8. There are two classes of officers in the Militia, whose interests and objects differ; these two classes cannot with advantage be dealt with, as they are at present, under identical regulations.

9. Some officers desire to give more service than is at present demanded of them. Some officers are not able to give more than is at present required. The two classes should be dealt with separately.

CHAPTER XX

THE MILITIA : PART II

THE MILITIA AND THE REGULAR ARMY.

It will be seen from the facts which have been enumerated in the previous chapter that the condition of the Militia was not unjustly described as "lamentable." Not only are the numbers declining year by year; not only is the force admittedly unfit to take the field; not only are officers and men discouraged, but the system under which the Militia is administered is such that there is no hope of an amendment, unless and until some radical change in the constitution and administration of the force has been made.

That the evils are inherent in the system can scarcely be doubted. It has often been said that the Militia has been made entirely subsidiary to the Regular Army, and is being bled to death for the benefit of the Line. The statement is true, but it is also true that as long as the relations between the Regular Army and the Militia continue on their present footing, the latter not only will be, but must be sacrificed to the former. As between the Regular Army and the Militia, the balance of attraction is at present slightly in favour of the Army, and in consequence militiamen pass, as we have seen, from their own battalions into those of the Line. It is not only desirable that they should do so, it is absolutely essential. If we are compelled to choose between the Regular Army and the

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Militia, we must perforce give the preference to the former. If either is to perish, it must not be the Regular Army. The reason is obvious. The regular soldier is available for service abroad in time of war; the militiaman is not. The regular soldier receives a real training under professional officers; the militiaman does not. The regular soldier at the end of his colour service passes to the Reserve; the militiaman does not. For these reasons, as long as the system compels us to elect between the two, it is the militiaman who must give way to the regular soldier. That such must be the case becomes still more evident when we consider what would happen if, by any means, we could so vary the present system as to make the attractions of the Militia superior to those of the Regular Army.

THE DEPENDENCE OF THE ARMY ON THE MILITIA.

Let us take for the purpose of illustration the figures for 1904 already referred to.¹

In the year in question 15,648 militiamen passed into the Regular Army. Of these the great majority were Infantry. What would be the inevitable result of a change whereby these militiamen were persuaded to remain in the force in which they originally enlisted? The Militia has become, *ex hypothesi*, more attractive than the Army; therefore the men who under the present system pass from the former to the latter will cease to do so. In other words, the Infantry of the Line will lose some 12,000 recruits in a single year. But this is by no means the end of the matter. It must be assumed that the increased attractions which have sufficed to keep men in the Militia, will also suffice to attract to the Militia men who, under present conditions, would go into the Line.

¹ See p. 190.

Let us suppose that 5,000 men are thus withheld from the Line, and we shall find ourselves confronted with a deficit of 17,000 men, or 77 per cent. of the total recruits for the Infantry of the Line. The position of the Army Council under these circumstances will be one of great embarrassment. The Indian drafts will not be forthcoming; the battalions at home and abroad will be reduced to skeletons, if they are not absolutely destroyed. In a word, the British Infantry of the Line will well-nigh disappear.

Such must be the inevitable result of an arrangement which merely withholds militiamen from the Army, without altering the system as a whole. It may be contended that no change can ever be made which will have so drastic an operation as that which has been described, but to accept such an argument is merely to admit that the object in view cannot be attained, and that the evil complained of must remain without a remedy.

THE MILITIA AND THE VOLUNTEERS.

Again, the Militia, on the testimony of many observers, is suffering through the competition of the Volunteers. There can be no doubt that in many districts such is the case. It is, indeed, only natural that men who find they can obtain regular payment for fifteen days' service in a Volunteer Camp, should, in many cases, prefer to limit their soldiering to that period, rather than serve for a month at a shilling a day in a Militia battalion.¹

But that, under the existing system, there must be a direct competition between Militia and Volunteers is inevitable. The militiaman is enlisted for home service only; so is the volunteer. The militiaman is paid for his services; so, with growing

¹ There are cases in which, in the opinion of well-informed judges, as many as 400 men have been diverted from a Militia Battalion to a Field Army Volunteer Battalion.

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frequency, is the volunteer. The militiaman comes out for a short training each year; so does the volunteer. So far as differences exist between the conditions of service in the two branches, the terms of Militia service are certainly more irksome than those of the volunteer. The militiaman is under stricter discipline than the volunteer; his training usually takes place under less agreeable conditions, and throughout the year he obtains less sympathy and consideration from the public than does his comrade.

THE MILITIA AND WAR.

Lastly, the Militia suffers, and suffers greatly, from the fact that no definite position in the scheme of national defence is assigned to it. By law, the Militia is maintained for service in the United Kingdom only; in practice, officers and men are expected to serve abroad whenever they are required. Although the Militia is expected to serve abroad, and although the officers and men have usually come forward in large numbers and accepted the obligation to do so, no provision whatever has been made for the utilisation of the force outside these Islands. Neither the equipment, the organisation, nor the composition of the Militia is consistent with any idea of systematic preparation for war. The dispatch of the Militia overseas is always regarded as a sort of "happy thought," an emergency measure, the need for which could never have been foreseen.¹

Much is said, from time to time, about the Militia being regarded as the reserve for the Regular Army. It is not, and cannot be anything

¹ The Secretary of State for War has recently announced that the Bill making foreign service for the Militia compulsory, which was introduced in 1905, and passed through the House of Lords, is to be re-introduced. If the strong opposition which it met with from the party now in power (1906) be not renewed, the Bill will pass into law, and a valuable step in advance will have been taken.

of the kind. Militiamen cannot be drafted into the Line battalions of the regiments of which they are supposed to form a part.¹

It is, of course, quite right that no such power of transfer should exist. It would be incompatible with the rôles assigned to the two branches of the Service at the present time.

But it is well to realise that the habit of speaking about the Militia as a reserve for the Line is merely an instance of careless thought and expression. Nor can it be said with any greater approach to accuracy that the Militia is, or can be made under existing conditions, a reinforcement for the Regular Army.

Setting aside, for the moment, the initial difficulty of the state of the law which makes it impossible for the Army Council to reckon beforehand on the services of any Militia unit, or any individual officer or man for an oversea campaign, let us assume that the Militia is really asked to provide an organised contingent to reinforce the army in the field. Let us see exactly what would happen. It will be well to confine ourselves to a very modest demand upon the force, and to be content with two divisions of eight battalions each. It will also be well to err on the side of moderation in fixing the strength of the battalions and to limit it to 800 men.

THE ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE AN ORGANISED FORCE OF MILITIA.

What would happen, in practice, if an attempt were made to work out this problem? In the first place it would appear at once that in order to

¹ They cannot even be drafted into another Militia battalion in their own or a neighbouring county unless such battalion is technically part of the same "corps" as that to which they belong. Thus a man can be drafted *with his consent* from the 1st Somerset Militia into the 2nd Somerset Militia. But even with his consent he cannot be drafted from the 2nd West York Militia to the 5th West York Militia.

find sixteen battalions of 800 men each, all idea of local mobilisation must be abandoned. The battalions must be selected from all over the country and concentrated. Assuming, however, that the sixteen battalions have been discovered and selected, the next step must be to eliminate the unfit among the men composing them. By following the ordinary rules which are applied to any Line battalion on mobilisation for foreign service, we shall find that no less than 5,600 out of the total of 12,800 must be left behind. To fill up their places, men must be obtained by calling for volunteers from other battalions—for drafting is not only most undesirable, but is against the law. By this means the total may be made up. But at what a cost? No sooner have the divisions embarked than the inevitable waste will begin, increasing rapidly as the hardships of the campaign and the fire of the enemy produce their effect. To fill up the gaps so made there will be no reserve available. In the case of most Line battalions there will be some reservists not required on mobilisation, and there will be the young soldiers left behind on account of their youth, but rapidly maturing. But for the Militia divisions there are no reservists, and of the men left behind very few will be available, for in the Infantry Militia we have no less than 13,735 men serving who are under nineteen years of age, and 5,089 under eighteen. Boys of seventeen and eighteen cannot be sent to the front, and in two years' time, when they are mature, the war may be over.

Thus it will be seen that while the Militia is not, and, indeed, ought not to be regarded as a reserve for the Regular Army, neither can it, under existing conditions, be utilised as a reinforcement.

These facts were made abundantly clear during the South African War, but the knowledge so gained has not, hitherto, been applied; and if the

country were to be involved in a serious war to-morrow, the Militia would be even less fitted to take its place in the fighting line than it was in 1900.¹

THE DISEASE AND THE REMEDY.

What, then, is the remedy for the malady from which the Militia is suffering? Its general nature is indicated by the character of the disease. The Militia is being destroyed by the competition of the Regular Army; and the system is so perverse that, unless that competition continues to the disadvantage of the Militia, the Regular Army must suffer.

Clearly, therefore, the competition must cease, but its cessation must be accompanied by an alteration in the system which will allow of the change being made without inflicting injury upon the Army.

The Militia, in the words of the Report of the Duke of Norfolk's Commission, is "unfit to take the field for the defence of this country." It ought to be so organised as to be fit for this, its primary duty.

The Militia is regarded in all our military calculations as an integral part of the Army, available for service oversea. But the Militia is, by law, limited to service in the United Kingdom. The law ought to be altered without delay, and to be brought into accordance with the practice.

¹ The quality of the Militia battalions sent to South Africa or to the Mediterranean during the War, varied greatly. Certain battalions were strong in numbers, and with a sufficiency of officers. But the question of forming a Militia Division and maintaining it as an active Field Force never arose. The fact that the so-called Militia Reserve has very rightly been abolished has not materially altered the situation. In 1900 a certain number of the Militia Reserve were contributed to the Line battalions, which gained what the Militia lost. At the present time, no Militia reservists would be available for the Regular Army, and to that extent the Regular Army would be worse off now than in 1900. But it is not easy to show that there has been any corresponding gain to the Militia as yet.

The present method of officering the Militia is profoundly unsatisfactory, and must necessarily be so, as long as the practice of utilising the Commissioned ranks of the Militia as a mere halting-place for officers of the Regular Army is continued. It ought to be abandoned and replaced by some other plan which will restore the prestige, and consequently increase the number and efficiency of Militia officers.

The irregularity in the strength and even the establishment of the various Militia battalions is so great as to make the utilisation of the Force as part of a modern army difficult, if not impossible. Some attempt should therefore be made to equalise the Militia battalions, and to provide them with a reserve available on mobilisation.

That all these necessary and indeed essential reforms can be accomplished, and accomplished in a way which will prove most acceptable to the officers and men of the Militia, the author has long believed.¹ Nothing that has taken place of late has tended to shake that belief. In 1904 the feeling of the House of Commons made any change impossible, and the result has been—what every one acquainted with the conditions of the Service must have anticipated—that the Militia has gone from bad to worse; the need for change has increased instead of diminishing.

How that change can be effected, how it might have been effected, had the country so willed, is explained in Chapter VI. of this volume. That chapter deals with the Short-Service Territorial Army, and it is as the largest and most important factor of that Territorial Army that the Militia can render the best service to the nation. Those who have read the chapter referred to with care, will perceive that by the adoption of the arrangements there proposed, the whole of the changes

¹ As furnishing some evidence on this point see Appendix VII.

which have been set forth above as necessary for the salvation of the Militia may be naturally and easily effected, and that every battalion which the nation chooses to redeem from its present position by including it in the Territorial Army will thereby be given a real military existence, and will become once more a valuable and indeed essential part of the National Army.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XX.

1. In the competition for recruits between the Regular Army and the Militia, it is in the interests of the nation that the Regular Army should prevail.
2. The fact that the Regular Army prevails is detrimental to the Militia.
3. A system under which one force can only exist at the expense of another is bad, and ought to be changed.
4. The Militia suffers from the competition of the Volunteers as well as from that of the Regular Army.
5. The arrangement by which the Militia is expected to serve abroad in time of War, yet is by law confined to the United Kingdom, is anomalous and ought to be altered.
6. Under existing conditions the Militia cannot be formed into a modern Army.
7. The South African War provided lessons with respect to the Militia which have been imperfectly learnt, and by which we have failed to profit.
8. The nature of the disease from which the Militia is suffering being apparent, the nature of the remedy is also apparent.
9. The nature of the remedy is indicated in Chapter VI. of this book.

CHAPTER XXI

THE VOLUNTEERS: PART I

THE ORIGIN OF THE VOLUNTEER FORCE.

THE position of the Volunteers, in common with many other of our military arrangements, is an anomaly. It is probably true to say that no one charged with the duty of utilising the resources of the nation for the defence of the country would ever have created a force of the kind.

Like so many other British institutions, the Volunteers, as they exist, are the result of an accident. In 1859 the country was alarmed by threats of French invasion. The true defence of the country, the Navy, had been neglected, and there were many who thought that the French navy was equal, if not superior, to our own. Our Army was notoriously unable to cope with that of France. The alarm was genuine, and the reasons for it were not to be ignored. The ordinary precautions which prudence and foresight would have dictated had not been taken. The nation was as improvident, as over-confident, and as ignorant in all matters relating to war as it is at the present day.

In 1859, as on every single occasion on which we have been involved in war since that date, precautions had to be taken in a hurry, and emergency methods had to be resorted to. An appeal was made to the patriotism and public spirit of the nation, and a very splendid response was made to that appeal. Civilians in every rank of life came

forward and undertook to learn something of the military profession. Whether the force raised in 1859-60 would have proved effective, if put to the rude test of war, must be a matter of opinion. But that the Volunteers of that day did all they could to relieve a dangerous situation is beyond doubt.

For nearly fifty years the force raised in the emergency of 1859 has maintained its existence. In many respects its character has been greatly changed, in some respects for the better, in some, perhaps, for the worse. That it is better trained and better equipped now than in its earlier stages, can hardly be doubted.

WHY THE VOLUNTEERS ARE WHAT THEY ARE.

It has been said that in all probability no one would ever have created the Volunteer Force on its present basis as a deliberate and considered act. The same thing may be said with equal truth of the British Constitution. But both these great institutions exist, and both are accepted portions of our national life which may be amended, but which cannot be dispensed with. That, if the Volunteer Force had been the outcome of a reasoned effort, it would differ in many particulars from the Force as we see it, is obvious. In the early days, the object of the promoters of the movement was to raise a number of riflemen in the shortest possible time. The Force was to be regarded as exclusively a defence against invasion, and an invasion was expected at an early date. The relations of the Volunteer Force to the Regular Army and to the Militia were scarcely considered; and for reasons which were adequate at the time, but which are not applicable now, the preponderant rôle to be played by the Royal Navy was left out of sight. Nor was mind applied to matter in the raising of the different corps. Infantry and Artillery were raised with very slight regard to the actual needs

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of the Service, or to the suitability of the particular force to the locality in which it was recruited.

This peculiarity has marked the Volunteer Force throughout the whole of its existence. It is impossible to pretend that the distribution of the various arms, either numerical or geographical, has at any time been the outcome of a carefully-thought-out scheme, based upon purely military considerations.

At the present moment it would puzzle the most ingenious enquirer to give a reason for the figure at which the Volunteer establishment stands, for the proportion in which the various arms which compose it are maintained, or for the distribution of those arms viewed from a military standpoint.

It cannot be too clearly realised that the numbers and distribution of the Volunteers at the present time are due to chance and not to design.

In a measure this is no doubt due to the War Office, which is charged with the responsibility of raising, organising, distributing, and utilising the whole of the military forces in the United Kingdom. It is principally due to our national habit of dealing with all military questions in a purely amateur spirit, and resolutely refusing to regard them as in any way connected with actual war. But whatever be the nature and extent of the responsibility, the interest of the country is directed, and rightly directed towards the future rather than to the past.

THE MATERIAL AND THE USE MADE OF IT.

If it be true that the Volunteers under existing conditions are not all that can be desired, the first and obvious question which arises is, How can the organisation be improved, and how can the admirable material which the Volunteer Force contains be utilised to the best advantage?

That the material, or some of it, is admirable, is beyond doubt. It is strictly true to say that the best fighting material which the country possesses is to be found in the ranks of the Volunteers. This fact is so indisputable and so important that it is a pity its import should so frequently be misunderstood, and that a superstructure should so often be built upon it which it is not capable of supporting. The Volunteer Force contains some of the best military material the country possesses; but to deduce from this fact the conclusion that the Volunteer Force is uniformly good, or that the terms which can be applied to a part are equally applicable to the whole, is a fallacy.

Again, it is unfortunate that many persons in responsible positions should fail to realise that in the military, as in the manufacturing world the raw material, however excellent, only acquires its full value after going through the manipulation necessary to transform it into a marketable article.

The best officers and soldiers are made out of men of intelligence, courage, and good physique, but the mere possession of intelligence, courage, and good physique will not transform the members of a crowd into a victorious Army. Technical instruction, discipline, practice, and the habits of command and obedience, are all essential to the making of good soldiers as distinguished from good men. Nor will the possession of these qualifications avail unless their exercise is made easy and effective by careful organisation, by proper armament and equipment, and by the due apportioning of the various arms to meet the requirements of modern warfare.

It may be said, and not without reason, that the preceding paragraph is a recital of truisms so familiar as almost to merit the unpleasant name of platitudes. Indeed, no sensible person would hesitate to accept these plain statements of fact when advanced as abstract propositions. Unfortunately,

those who are acquainted with the methods of thought and controversy which are considered appropriate to the discussion of military affairs in this country, must realise that nothing is more distasteful to the British public than to reason from the general to the particular.

The principles by which an army should be governed, or a war conducted, are too often judged from some purely local, personal, and even private standpoint. Hence many hasty and ill-considered things are said and done, and principles, which in the abstract are admitted to be unimpeachable, are thrown to the winds the moment their application seems likely to interfere with some sectional view.

It is for this reason that it has been thought worth while to devote some space to the statement of principles which, like some deities, are worshipped in the shrine, but forgotten in the street.

THE REPORT OF THE "NORFOLK COMMISSION."

It is not proposed here to enter into any formal examination of the exact military value, or to attempt to define the precise functions of the Volunteer Force in time of war. Such an inquiry would be entirely outside the scope of this work. But enough has been said to show that if the Volunteer Force is all that it ought to be, and all that in view of the high qualities and public spirit of its members it might be, the fact is due rather to accident than to design.

Unfortunately, pleasing accidents of this kind do not often occur, and it is not wise to trust to chance to accomplish what wisdom and forethought ought to have done. There is, indeed, reason for thinking that chance has not acted the part of a beneficent fairy in this case.

The last and most important document dealing

with the Volunteer Force is beyond doubt the Report of the Commission over which the Duke of Norfolk presided, and which concluded its labours in 1904. It is not proposed to analyse this report at length, but one or two paragraphs in it, which relate specially to the Volunteers, must be cited, viz. :

"The units of Volunteers are of various establishments and strengths. Such differences render difficult the proper grouping into the larger formations required for service in the field

"The Volunteer Field Artillery lacks the requisite training and mobility

"The Transport equipment and Artillery materiel of the Volunteer Force are far from satisfactory

"Taking the Force as a whole, neither the musketry, nor the tactical training of the rank and file would enable it to face, with prospect of success, the troops of a Continental army."

THE NEXT STEP—DEFECTS AND REMEDIES.

Confronted by a statement such as that just quoted, a Secretary of State for War had but one course open to him, namely, to do all in his power to make it impossible that such a Report should ever be written again.

In what way could this object be achieved? There was but one answer. It could be achieved by giving to the Volunteers those opportunities for making themselves efficient which they had long desired, and which all the best officers were practically unanimous in asking for.

It is not necessary to enter into a detailed examination of the particular proposals which the Army Council, after full consultation with representative Volunteers, decided to adopt.

It is sufficient for the present purpose to point out that whatever changes were contemplated, whatever additional facilities proposed, it was essential that money should be expended for the purpose.

It was admitted on all sides that the pecuniary

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burden on the officers ought to be reduced, and that the holders of commissions should not be asked to give money, as well as time and energy, to the public service. Every officer, whether belonging to the Regular Army or to the Volunteers, agreed in the opinion that a week in Camp was of the greatest value, and that a fortnight in Camp was much more than twice as valuable as a week. As to the extent to which individual corps could or would extend the amount and period of their training, there was naturally some difference of opinion, but on the question of the value of camp training for those who could avail themselves of it, there was unanimity.

Again, the need for brigade and divisional organisation was admitted. Instruction for non-commissioned officers was justly regarded as of the highest importance. More practice ammunition, both for artillery and infantry, was demanded. Horse allowance was asked for by the mounted officers, and other claims were made, all of which deserved and received sympathetic attention, but the concession of which in every case involved the expenditure of money.

THE QUESTION OF COST.

Where was the money to come from? The impossibility of increasing the Army Estimates was admitted as a cardinal doctrine on both sides of the House of Commons; and if the opinion of the House could be judged by those who assumed the duty of speaking on its behalf, a large majority were ardently in favour of still further reduction. To reduce the expenditure on our very small Regular Army for the purpose of devoting the money to the Volunteers, would not have been a reasonable course. If reductions were to be made, it was obviously reasonable that all branches of the Army should bear some proportion of such reduction.

If, therefore, more money was to be spent on improving the Volunteer Force, coupled with a reduction of the Volunteer Vote or with the retention of the Volunteer Vote at its normal figure, it was evident that the sums required could only be obtained by a diminution of expenditure on one part of the force, with a view to expending the sum so saved on the remainder.

To leave things exactly as they were in face of the Report of the Norfolk Commission was out of the question.

It was necessary to see whether this transfer of expenditure could be made, and if so, in what way it could be made with the least disadvantage to the Service. The natural step was to inquire whether any part of the Volunteer Force could be reduced without injury to the fighting power of the country.

NON-EFFECTIVES AND THE CAPITATION GRANT.

There could be but one answer to this question. There is, and probably always has been, a certain portion of the Volunteer Force which cannot by any stretch of benevolent imagination be regarded as likely to be of value in time of war. Every officer knows well that the tendency of the existing regulations is to bring numbers of men into the Force, not because they are good soldiers or likely to become so, but because the addition of their names to the rolls entitles the corps to a capitation grant of 35s. in respect of each individual. In many corps it is not possible for a Volunteer commanding officer, however conscientious, to dispense with these men—or, rather, with the funds which they represent. The fixed expenses of the corps must be met, and if the total membership falls below a certain figure, the concern can only be carried on at a loss,—a loss which eventually falls upon the commanding officer himself.

It need hardly be said that this is a thoroughly bad system. It is bad for the nation to have in the ranks of its Army men who will fail in the day of battle. It is bad for the taxpayer to pay for that which is of no value. It is bad for the commanding officers. They know perfectly well that what is true of every other institution in this country is true also of a Volunteer corps, and that it is the club, the society, the football team, the choir, the regiment which can afford to exclude applicants, which will always excel the kindred institution whose doors are open to all the world, and which has to go out into the highways and hedges to compel men or women to enter them.

Open a first-rate club and advertise for members, and the first-rate club will become a fifth-rate club in a very short time. And the same thing is true of Volunteer units. It is those which can afford to exclude unsuitable men that are the best and the most highly regarded.

It is true that the danger of having useless men in the ranks of a body whose sole purpose is to win a victory in war, does not seem to be fully appreciated by some persons. Here, for instance, is an extract from a leading article in an important and widely circulated London daily paper. It is characteristic of a great body of opinion. The article is a plea in defence of the inefficient Volunteer :

"It may be freely admitted," says the writer, "that the Volunteer who cannot, or will not, make himself an efficient soldier, is not worth his cost *ad hoc*. But he has some real value, nevertheless, as helping to form a connecting link between the civilian population and the Regulars.

"Non-efficient Volunteers, although they cannot shoot straight, and have no acquaintance with the self-helpfulness begotten of camp life, assist battalions to make an imposing appearance on parade, thus nourishing *esprit de corps*, the

very foundation of the regimental system. The real question is, therefore, how much these incidental advantages are worth to the taxpayer, apart from the value of the class as efficient auxiliaries."

It would be hard to find a more childish or a more dangerous doctrine. When the Chinese clad themselves in war masks and "made faces" in the hope of repelling an attack supported by Armstrong guns and Enfield rifles, we laughed a superior laugh, and the Chinese were killed or taken prisoners. But the Chinese practice was not one inch behind that which is recommended to the people of this country in the extract which has been quoted; and the fate which befell the Chinese behind their papier-mâché masks is exactly that which will undoubtedly befall us also, if we play with war as our journalistic mentor would have us do.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XXI.

1. The existence of the Volunteer Force in its present shape is the result of accident rather than of design.

2. Neither the strength nor the organisation of the Volunteer Force is referable to purely military considerations.

3. While the Volunteer Force contains within it the best military material in the country, the force, as a whole, is not in a satisfactory condition.

4. The Duke of Norfolk's Commission reported that the training of the rank and file would not enable the Volunteer Force to face Continental troops with a prospect of success.

5. The Volunteers being reported unfit to face Continental troops, it was the duty of the Army Council to endeavour to make them fit.

6. To secure efficiency greater expenditure was required. The necessary funds could only be obtained by additional grants from the Treasury, or by a reduction of the least valuable portion of the force.

7. The system on which the payment of Volunteer Capitation Grants is paid is unsound, and stands in need of amendment.

CHAPTER XXII

THE VOLUNTEERS: PART II

THE POSITION IN 1904.

As long as the Army Council remained bound by the strict obligation of finding any money for the improvement of the Volunteer Force within the limits of the Volunteer Vote, the most reasonable method of procedure was to transfer the expenditure from the inefficient to the efficient members of the Force. No more obvious and certain way of doing this suggested itself than that of altering the incidence of the capitation grant, and increasing the allowance to campers. Both courses were accordingly proposed. It was pointed out with irresistible force by Volunteer officers that an increase in camp grant alone would not produce the desired result, if it were coupled with a reduction of the capitation grant in the case of non-campers. The camp grant, as a rule, is expended during the period spent in camp. The capitation grant furnishes the only resource by which the general expenses of the corps can be met. The greater part of these expenses are in the nature of a fixed charge for maintaining the establishment of the corps. It therefore became evident that unless the diminution of capitation grant, in respect of men who did not go into camp at all, were compensated for by the addition to the grant paid in respect of campers, many corps would suffer very serious loss. It was therefore decided to

incorporate in the scheme a proposal for an additional capitation grant.

THE ARMY COUNCIL AND THE VOLUNTEERS.

It is common knowledge that the proposal to reduce the Force in any way was regarded with disfavour by a large section of the public. Condemnation of this kind, based on insufficient information, has not any necessary connection with military efficiency, but of the existence of the feeling there could be no doubt. Its existence, however, did not in any way dispense the military authorities from the duty of discharging their responsibility. To leave the Volunteers admittedly inefficient was impossible. To expend more money upon making them efficient, and at the same time to retain the useless members of the Force, was forbidden on financial grounds, if on no other. There only remained the alternative of obtaining the requisite sum by the reduction of the Force in the manner suggested, namely, by discarding those who had not time or inclination to make themselves efficient soldiers. Such was the first stage in the development of the problem.

On April 5th, 1905, the situation was to a certain extent changed by a declaration made in the course of debate by the Prime Minister, who gave an undertaking that any money saved by a reduction of numbers should be applied in its entirety to the improvement of the remainder of the Force. This dictum modified, though it did not fundamentally alter, the position. As soon as the authorities became aware that they were entitled to maintain the Volunteer Vote without diminution, the necessity for the reduction of numbers became less stringent. A reduction was necessary if money was to be found to carry out the new proposals, but a net saving on the Vote was not now required.

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THE REDUCTION OF NUMBERS.

It was evident, however, that the objection to any reduction in numbers still remained. Frequent declarations were made in the House of Commons by members of both parties, to the effect that Parliament would gladly vote any additional sums which were required to maintain the strength of the Volunteers and to increase their efficiency. Some speakers went so far as to say that, in their opinion, the country would welcome a large addition to the Volunteer Vote. It is possible to recognise the prevalence and, indeed, the importance of this opinion without acquiescing in its wisdom. There can be little doubt that prudence and statesmanship would unite to condemn any reduction of the expenditure upon our small Regular Army, and would counsel caution in the matter of further additions to the Volunteer Force until, at any rate, the existing Force had been made undeniably fit for battle. But be that as it may, opinion appeared to be resolutely opposed to any actual diminution. Under these circumstances, but one course remained open to the Secretary of State. The situation had changed in one respect, but it had not changed in another. The reduction of numbers was inadmissible, but the need for increased efficiency was as great as ever. The Secretary of State took the only action which was possible under these conditions. He pointed out that the decision not to reduce numbers necessarily involved an additional grant of money, and he asked that this grant should be sanctioned. A scheme, modified to meet the new conditions, was drawn up and considered by the Army Council, approved by them, and submitted by the Secretary of State to the Government of which he was a member. The scheme was sanctioned by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and by the Government. It involved

an addition to the Volunteer Vote of £180,000 to £200,000 a year. The general nature of the scheme was announced by the Secretary of State in a speech made by him at Hanley on November 27th, 1905. In the ordinary course the new arrangements would have taken effect forthwith, and the camp grants and capitation allowances of 1906 would have been earned in accordance with the new scale.¹

THE PROPOSALS OF 1905.

The following are the principal proposals which received the approval of the Army Council and the Government in the autumn of 1905 :—

1. "That all Volunteers, whatever corps they belonged to, should be permitted to attend camp for fifteen days, for eight days, or not at all, as they might elect, but that strong inducements should be offered to them to go into camp by granting graduated capitation allowances on the following scale :—

| | £ | s. | d. |
|---------------------------------|---|----|----|
| Fifteen days' camp | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Eight days' camp | 1 | 18 | 6 |
| No attendance in camp | 1 | 0 | 0 |

2. "That all Volunteers, in order to earn even the lowest capitation grant to which they might be entitled, viz., £1, should attend thirty drills of an hour, instead of ten drills only as at present, but that attendance in camp should count as follows : Each clear day in camp (Sundays excepted) to count as three attendances. Those of arrival and departure as one attendance each.

3. "That having regard to the varying conditions of life and occupations under which Volunteers

¹ In December, 1905, a change took place in the Administration of the country, and one of the first results was the arrest of the Volunteer proposals. Within a few weeks the Chief of the General Staff announced at a public dinner that the proposals sanctioned by the Army Council and by the Government in October would not be proceeded with. In February, 1906, the interdict was partially removed, and that portion of the scheme which related to the Brigade organisation of the Volunteers was promulgated.

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serve, it was necessary that a certain amount of elasticity should be given to the conditions of their service, so that they might earn a sufficient grant to enable the corps to which they belonged to support themselves financially. That with this object, in certain special cases of well-established necessity, individual corps might remain under present conditions as regards money grants, capitation grant being 35s.; that in the case of these corps attendance in camp would not, for the present, be compulsory, but that no member of the corps should be considered efficient who had not attended 30 drills of one hour each.

4. "That camp allowances be granted to pay the expenses of men going into camp at the following rates :—

Fifteen-day campers . £3, or 4s. per day per man.

Eight-day campers . £1, or 2s. 6d. „ „

5. "That the camp allowance to officers should remain as at present, viz., 11s. 6d. a day for fifteen-day campers and 8s. a day for eight-day campers.

6. "That all mounted Volunteer officers who are fifteen days in camp should receive horse allowance of £5.

7. "That the establishment of the Volunteer Force should be fixed at 5 per cent. in excess of the then existing strength.

8. "That the Volunteer Force should be organised into brigades, each brigade to consist of four or more battalions. Each brigade to have a permanent commander and a permanent brigade major.

9. "That the Volunteers should eventually be organised by divisions, and that as a step in this direction one division should be formed immediately with a permanent brigadier-general in command, with the permanent staff officer under him.¹

¹ The Council were also of opinion that it would probably be necessary to appoint a "Staff officer for Volunteers" to the staff of the G.O.C.-in-C. in each district.

10. "That the reduction of the cyclist allowance from £2 to £1 should be maintained, but that cyclists attending camp for eight days should receive an additional 10s., and those who attend for fifteen days 20s."

Some minor proposals were made with regard to Mounted Infantry, Submarine Mines and Fortress Companies of Royal Engineers, which need not be discussed in detail.

TWO CLASSES OF VOLUNTEERS.

It will be noted that the decisions enumerated above are the embodiment of the policy advocated from the very beginning with regard to the Volunteers. In two points only do they show any variation. In the first place no reference is made to the division of the Volunteers into two classes. This idea originally commended itself to the Secretary of State, and was referred to by him in a speech in the House of Commons on July 14th, 1904. But the plan was abandoned at an early stage in deference to the strong opposition which was shown to it. There can be little doubt, however, that such a division is essentially right and in the interests of the Volunteers, and the abandonment of the proposal was made easier by the knowledge that the division does in fact exist, and is likely to become more accentuated in the future. In a force of 250,000 men, composed of men of all sorts of occupations, and drawn from every class of the community, there will always be those who are able and willing to give a considerable amount of time to the performance of their military duties, and who are ready to accept terms of enlistment which will make them readily available as part of an organised force in time of emergency. There are others, and these are the majority of the Force, who, though willing, are

not able, by reason of their occupations, to devote much time to military instruction, or to pledge themselves in any way likely to interfere with their daily work. It is reasonable and convenient that this great and obvious division should be reflected in the organisation of the Volunteers.

As a matter of fact, it has for some years past been so reflected. No less than twenty-seven corps, known as Field Army Battalions, have entered into special engagements, and have received special payment on that account. This is, however, not the best method of dealing with the problem. The best method is probably that which was originally proposed, namely, that, wherever possible, corps should be divided into two battalions, composed respectively of those who can, and those who cannot devote a considerable amount of time to making themselves efficient soldiers. There are many places in which a Volunteer corps of 1,000 men could with advantage be divided into two battalions of 400 and 600 respectively, the former accustomed to drill and work together, and with a full complement of trained officers; the latter composed of men of less leisure, or less zeal, but containing within it many men who had passed through the 1st Battalion. There can be little doubt that on a sudden emergency the existence of a number of really efficient, homogeneous, well-officered battalions ready to march at short notice, and composed only of trained men, would be of great value. The 1st Battalion would, in fact, be equivalent to a regiment of the First Line, the 2nd Battalion would furnish the material for a reserve. Given a thoroughly effective cadre, it is easy to double the companies in time of war without greatly impairing their efficiency. However, this matter need not be discussed further, as in the form originally suggested the idea has not been embodied in any actual proposal. It will, however,

probably be revived either in the original form, or in the form of a "Volunteer Reserve," consisting of men who have served for a certain length of time with an efficient corps.

In one other important particular the proposals set out above differ from those made in 1904. They do not involve any reduction in numbers. The reason for this change has been clearly explained; it is in the main a question of money. But it must be borne in mind that had the proposals been carried into effect, the all-important condition of a reduction in the number of inefficient men would have been fulfilled.

CAMPS AND CAMP ALLOWANCE.

The following comments will be of use in explaining the various points of the scheme:—

The camp arrangements were intended to introduce that elasticity into the administration of the Force which its best representatives have always declared to be necessary. It is desirable that all Volunteers should go into camp for fifteen days, but it is not reasonable to expect that they all will do so. In the interests of efficiency it is wise to give special encouragement to those who undertake the full period of training. In the interests of the individual Volunteers it is desirable that the enlistment of men to the Force who cannot comply with these conditions should still be possible. It will be observed that the changes with respect to the capitation grants have the following effect: 15s. is taken from a corps in respect of every man who does not go into camp at all, the grant being reduced from 35s. to £1. But it was pointed out that a reduction of this kind, though reasonable enough in itself, must greatly injure the finances of some corps if unaccompanied by an increase in the capitation grant in respect of men who do

attend camp. The capitation allowance, therefore, in respect of eight-day campers was increased by 3s. 6d., from £1 15s. to £1 18s. 6d., while the capitation grant in respect of fifteen-day campers was increased by no less than 7s., viz., from 35s. to 42s.

That those who do not go into camp at all should be required to make themselves reasonably efficient in some other way is a proposal to which no serious objection can be taken. When it is remembered that the private soldier in every foreign army is under continuous instruction for two, and in some cases for three years, it must be admitted that an amount of instruction equivalent in all to about three working days per annum is not excessive. Even under the conditions contained in the new proposals, a civilian, who, in a period of five years, attended drill for 150 hours, would be considered fit to perform the duties of a soldier. There are some who may say that this is too little; few persons who realise what modern war means will regard it as being too much.

THE “CLASS CORPS.”

The proposal to meet the case of certain special corps is an admission of the very varied conditions under which the Volunteers serve, rather than a logical development of a correct principle. There are certain corps such as the London Scottish, the Artists, and a few others both in London and elsewhere, which are sometimes described by the not altogether satisfactory title of “Class Corps.” As to the excellence of the material of which these corps are composed there can be no doubt whatever, and they perhaps have special value as the source from which a large supply of officers may be obtained in time of emergency. Those who have spoken on their behalf are clear that at present these corps could not take advantage of

the proposed regulations without suffering a serious diminution in numbers, and consequent pecuniary loss. Whether this would prove to be the case in practice, time alone can show. There are many who believe—and the present writer is of the number—that in a very short time these special corps would conform to the regulations affecting the bulk of the Force, in order to obtain the full advantage of the increased capitation grants. But on this point there can be no certainty. The whole question is an exceedingly difficult one, but the solution eventually arrived at by the Army Council seems, on the whole, to present fewer difficulties than any other.

CAMP ALLOWANCES AND OFFICERS.

The camp allowance in the case of fifteen-day campers was to be reduced from £4 to £3, or from 5*s.* a day to 4*s.* This allowance was originally given to the so-called Field Army Battalions, 27 in number, and it was a condition of receiving the grant that at least 500 men should attend camp for the whole fifteen days. It must be remembered, however, that the 5*s.* grant was confined to some 28,000 men, and it was out of the power of any officer or man among the remaining 212,000 officers and men of the Volunteer Force to earn it. In the interests of the whole Force it was decided to extend the benefit of the fifteen days' allowance. The amount, it is true, was reduced from 5*s.* to 4*s.*, but it was made quite evident that to provide for the actual expenses incurred in camp 4*s.* was amply sufficient. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that the reduction was accompanied by an additional capitation grant of 7*s.* per man, making the net reduction 13*s.* only, and that the obligation to take 500 men into camp was no longer binding. Meanwhile the great bulk of the Volunteer Force would have gained immensely by the change.

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The officers' allowances require little comment. No alteration was proposed in respect to the unmounted officers. If more money were available it might be well to make some increase in the rate of allowance paid in respect of all officers. The grant of a £5 horse allowance to mounted officers meets a long-felt want.

THE QUESTION OF NUMBERS.

The question of the numbers of the Volunteer Force is often misunderstood, and the misapprehension has given rise to many uninformed and unwise criticisms. The nominal establishment of the Volunteer Force is 347,000. But this total has no relation whatever to actual numbers. In the above proposals, the establishment was fixed at five per cent. above the strength as it stood on October 31st, 1905.¹

The margin of five per cent. is equivalent to an addition of 12,000 men, but it was not the intention to increase the force by this amount. It was intended to make use of the margin to enable the G.O.C.'s of the various districts to have something to "veer and haul upon," in other words, to enable them to adjust the strength of the corps under their respective commands. It was felt that corps which suffered as a result of the previously existing camp regulations would be unable to regain the strength necessary to enable them to put their finances on a sound basis, unless they were permitted to increase their numbers above the figure at which they stood on October 31st, 1905. It was calculated that while there would, in all probability, be no considerable addition to the total number of the Force, the efficiency of individual units would be increased by a judicious use of the permitted margin.

¹ This date was selected as being that on which the Force stood at its maximum for the year.

THE QUESTION OF ORGANISATION.

The question of the organisation of the Force into brigades and divisions was one of the highest importance. A Brigade Division already existed, but the system was capable of improvement in some important respects, and the appointment of permanent officers was greatly to be desired. The steps to be taken were admittedly tentative. Such an organisation as that contemplated is not sufficient for the creation of a true army, and even if the divisional organisation were to be carried out in its entirety, much more would remain to be done before any portion of the Volunteer Force could be utilised with confidence against a modern army. But that the steps proposed were in the right direction, few would deny. It is unnecessary here to go into details of the actual distribution of brigades, the rate of pay of officers, etc., as the changes approved by the Army Council in 1905 have now been made public in so far as they concern these points.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XXII.

1. The proposals made by the Army Council in 1905 tended to give greater elasticity to the organisation of the Volunteers, to encourage camping, to increase efficiency, and to reduce the burden of expenditure falling on the officers.
2. The proposals made by the Army Council, and sanctioned by the Government, were abandoned in 1906.
3. The division of the Volunteers into two classes has always existed in fact, and will probably receive further official recognition.
4. It is desirable to encourage camp training, and camp allowances should be fixed on such a scale as to make camping possible and easy for officers and men.
5. The organisation of the Volunteer Force, which was arranged and sanctioned in 1905, has not been discontinued.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE VOLUNTEERS: PART III

VOLUNTEER EFFICIENCY AND NUMBERS.

THERE remain two points which must be referred to before we leave the subject of the Volunteers. Both points arise out of passing episodes, and might be neglected as non-essential were it not that they both illustrate in very marked fashion the kind of difficulty which besets any individual or any department which endeavours to obtain from the Force the service which, under proper conditions, it is capable of rendering.

No sooner was it announced in 1904 that the Army Council proposed to inquire into the efficiency of the Volunteers in common with the rest of the Army, than a violent opposition to any reform was instituted in the House of Commons, and in certain sections of the Press. At no time did the opposition come from the bulk of the Volunteer Force, and much that was said and written by its self-appointed champions found no echo among the vast majority of officers and men serving. But the opposition, which for the most part was of a purely negative and destructive character, was conducted with some skill and with great system. It became necessary in the interests of the attack to create the belief that the Volunteer Force had suffered and was suffering numerically in consequence of the steps taken or proposed by the Army Council. Hardly a speech was made in Parliament, hardly an article on the Volunteer question

appeared in the newspapers, in which the melancholy consequences of the folly and ineptitude of the War Office were not held up to opprobrium, and the sorrowful effect upon all branches of the Force of official blundering made the subject of lamentation.

It is curious to note that these complaints were absolutely without foundation. Whatever may have been the wisdom of the changes made and proposed, they certainly did not produce the results which were attributed to them, and which were represented as being their inevitable and evil consequence. The officers and men of the Volunteer Force, it was said, harassed and disgusted by the treatment they had received, were leaving the ranks by thousands; the camping conditions were so onerous that Volunteers could not comply with them; officers were resigning their commissions in unprecedented numbers; in a word, the Volunteer Force was being destroyed.

The facts are as follows:—In 1898, before the South African War, the number of Volunteer officers was 8,354. In 1904 it had risen to 8,955. So far from the changes made or suggested in 1903 and 1904 resulting in an exodus of officers, the reduction of officers in 1904 was the smallest in any years subsequent to the war; the net reduction being 14 only. In 1898 the number of Volunteers of all ranks was 230,678; in 1904 it was 253,909. So far from the Camp regulations having proved an insuperable obstacle, 175,000 men, by far the largest number which had ever gone under canvas in one year, attended camp. It is, of course, true that the numbers of the Volunteer Force increased during the South African War, but this increase was abnormal. Compared with 1898, the number of officers and men, as has been stated, showed a large increase, viz.—

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| Increase of officers | . | . | . | . | . | 601 |
| Increase of men | . | . | . | . | . | 23,231 |

An addition of something like 30 battalions in six years is scarcely an evidence of persistent ill-treatment. It is true that in 1905 there was a falling off in the total number of the Volunteers, the total being 249,611, or 4,000 less than in 1904, and 19,000 more than in 1898. But this falling off was in no sense due to the causes to which some have chosen to attribute it. On the contrary, it was due almost entirely to the completion of the term of engagement of a number of men who entered the Service for a given period during the South African War.

It will be seen, therefore, that the true facts with regard to the Volunteer Force have been either greatly misunderstood, or deliberately mis-stated.

THE CIRCULAR OF 1905.

Another matter of administration connected with the Volunteer Force deserves to be mentioned, partly on account of its intrinsic importance, and partly on account of the light which its discussion throws upon the state of the public mind.

During the year 1904 the debates on Army Estimates in the House of Commons were many and prolonged. It was frequently urged by speakers on both sides that the Volunteers should be regarded, to a much greater extent than hitherto, as a force to be relied upon to reinforce the Regular Army in case of war abroad. The fact that some Volunteers were struck off the rolls of their regiments for the purpose of joining the Army in South Africa was cited as evidence that an ample supply of men would be forthcoming in the event of a struggle with a great Military Power.

This view, which was shared by many, found very definite expression in the speech of Sir Edward Grey, who, in the course of the discussion which took place upon the Vote for the Pay of the Army on the 3rd April, 1905, said: "What we shall have

to do if we are ever engaged in a great war is to rely on our Navy and our Regular Army, as prepared in time of peace, to give us security at the outset, and then, to give ourselves staying power, to manufacture soldiers as the war goes on. I believe that is what Japan has been doing in the present war, and doing with conspicuous success. How are we to get these large numbers in time of war, and as quickly as possible? We can only get them out of the Volunteers.

“The Volunteers, I think, must be made to feel that their system is a real system of national training, by means of which, if this country is ever attacked in a great war, either at home or abroad, the nation will be able to use all its resources and united energies for the defence of any part of the Empire.”¹

THE VOLUNTEERS AND FOREIGN SERVICE.

The opinion expressed by Sir Edward Grey was echoed by various members of the Volunteer Force in Parliament and without it. In the opinion of the author the true purpose for which the Volunteers are raised and maintained is not to serve abroad. If such were their true duty, their present organisation would, indeed, stand self-condemned.

Be that as it may, the plan of drafting an uncertain number of men from the units to which they belong to others with which they have nothing to do, cannot be regarded as a logical or an effective proceeding. But our military organisation bears few traces of any logical arrangement; and if it were to be assumed that the War Office must in the future count upon Volunteers for foreign service, the duty of ascertaining whether the Volunteers were fit to

¹ Hansard, vol. 144, pp. 176-178.

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undertake such service would become an obvious corollary of the acceptance of the assumption.

In the summer of 1904, therefore, the Army Council issued a circular to the General Officers Commanding in the various districts in the following terms :—

THE CIRCULAR.

CONFIDENTIAL.

Circular Letter calling for Report upon the Physical Standard of Volunteers.

WAR OFFICE,
11th July, 1905.

SIR,—

In view of the fact that during the South African War large numbers of Volunteers offered themselves for service in the field, and in view of the many expressions of readiness on the part of the Force to take a similar step in the event of the country being again engaged in a serious war, the Army Council consider it necessary to ascertain beforehand what proportion of the Volunteers in your Command are likely to be qualified for active service abroad.

2. I am, therefore, to request that you will be good enough to direct Officers Commanding Volunteer corps in your Command to issue instructions to the Medical Officers of their units to report upon the general physical standard of the men under their charge, with a view to ascertaining their fitness for active service abroad.

3. Such fitness will be held to depend upon the following qualifications :—

- (a) That a man comes up to the physical equivalent of nineteen years of age, and is under forty-five;
 - (b) That in general physique he is not below the standard of physical requirements laid down in Appendix XIII., Volunteer Regulations;
 - (c) That he is of sound constitution, and free from organic disease;
 - (d) That he possesses a sufficient number of sound teeth for efficient mastication; and
 - (e) That he has no defects which are likely to interfere with marching or active exertion.
4. The Army Council desire to know what proportion of the men reported fit for active service under the above conditions are also first-class shots.

5. Reports should show the number of men in each corps fit and unfit, and in the case of the latter should specify the causes of unfitness.

6. I am also to request that you will be good enough to state, for the information of the Army Council, whether there are any Volunteer units in your Command which are inefficient from any cause, and, if so, whether you recommend that such units should be disbanded or amalgamated with other and more efficient corps.

You are at the same time requested to state whether your recommendations regarding such disbandment, or amalgamation, are based upon want of military efficiency, or paucity of numbers.

In making your recommendations I am to ask that you will add specific proposals regarding any consequent reductions in the case of Adjutants and other members of the Permanent Staff.

The Reports should be sent in not later than 31st October.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

E. W. D. WARD.

The General Officer Commanding-in-Chief,

.....*Command.*

THE OPPOSITION TO THE CIRCULAR.

The object of the circular is apparent from its terms. The fact that, except when in camp with the Regular troops, the Volunteers are not subject to any military discipline, made it impossible, even had it been desirable, to issue the circular in the form of an order to institute a medical examination of officers and men. Commanding officers were, therefore, instructed to report upon the physical fitness of the men under their command, and the method of obtaining the information was left to their discretion. The vast majority of the officers concerned took the natural and obvious course, and in order to obtain the information instituted a medical examination. It is not necessary to dwell at length upon the somewhat unfortunate outcry that arose in some quarters against this obvious and very reasonable procedure, but some reference

THE ANSWER TO THE CIRCULAR 239

to it is desirable because such reference affords a welcome opportunity of bearing testimony to the excellent good sense and discipline exhibited by the overwhelming majority of the officers and men concerned. It is no exaggeration to say that in some cases the appeals made to the Volunteers by individuals and by newspapers amounted to an incitement to insubordination; and nothing was left undone to mislead and prejudice the minds of soldiers who, in the public interest, were asked to give some evidence that they were fit for the public service. It is greatly to the credit of the Volunteers that these incitements met with no response. Officers were the first to submit themselves to the examination prescribed by their colonels, and non-commissioned officers and men followed their example with praiseworthy unanimity.

THE RESULT OF THE INQUIRY.

The total number of cases in which any serious difficulty was put in the way of those charged with obtaining the required information may be numbered on the fingers of one hand, and in but a single instance did the objection involve any serious and deliberate resistance to a proper order. In a word, the Volunteers showed infinitely more sense than their self-constituted advisers, and gave the Army Council the assistance it required without demur.

The inquiry remained incomplete,¹ but even in their incomplete form the results were most valuable. 180,000 officers and men were examined out of a total force of some 250,000 men. Of the 180,000 so examined, 29,000 were reported as medically unfit within the terms of the circular. In some cases the disqualification was complete:

¹ It was practically impossible to complete the inquiry in one year, as it could only be conducted satisfactorily while the battalions were in camp.

men were found to be in the ranks suffering from acute heart complaint, from strangulated hernia, from rupture, and from many other disabling infirmities. The test was an adequate, but not a rigorous one, and it revealed the fact that 16 per cent. of the men examined were unfit.¹ What was to be done with the unfit men? There would seem to be but one answer. The Army Council had ascertained beyond doubt that it was asking the nation to pay for 29,000 soldiers who were incapable of serving it. What was the obvious duty of the Army Council? Evidently its duty was to inform the country of the facts, and to spend no more of the nation's money upon the unfit men. Such, at any rate, was the view entertained by the Army Council in 1905, and orders were given that the capitation grant should in the future be withheld in respect of men pronounced to be physically unfit for service. In order that the corps which incurred a pecuniary loss by the dismissal of these men should not suffer, the Council, with the consent of the Government of the day and of the Treasury, agreed to an increased grant in respect of sound men who were willing to make themselves efficient.²

Such are the facts with regard to a curious episode. In this country we sometimes hear scornful criticisms of the pension list of the United States. But those who consider that, in view of the realities of war, any good purpose can be served by shutting our eyes to facts and continuing to rely upon soldiers who cannot take the field, have but small title to criticise those who equally for political and social reasons continue to pay public moneys to the dead.

¹ There is reason to believe that had the examination been completed and extended to the entire Force, the number of men reported as medically unfit would have been not less than 40,000.

² This order was cancelled in the spring of 1906, and the unfit men are still in the ranks at the expense of the taxpayer.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XXIII.

1. The effect of recent regulations introduced with the object of improving the efficiency of the Volunteers has not been to reduce the number of officers or men.

2. Statements to that effect are made without knowledge of the facts.

3. The regulations making "camp" compulsory did not tend to reduce the strength or the efficiency of the Volunteers.

4. The circular asking for information as to the physical fitness of the Volunteers was a reasonable and necessary act of precaution.

5. The opposition to the circular did not come from the Volunteers.

6. The replies to the circular disclosed the fact that in 1905 more than 30,000 volunteers were unfit to take the field.

7. These unfit volunteers are still retained in the Force, and are paid for by the nation.

CHAPTER XXIV

FIELD ARTILLERY OF THE AUXILIARY FORCES: PART I

THE NEED FOR MORE ARTILLERY.

THE question of utilising the Auxiliary Forces for the provision of Field Artillery is of sufficient intrinsic importance, and has attracted sufficient public attention, to deserve a special chapter. The position, if we are to judge by the opinions expressed with regard to it, is not clearly understood. There are at present 28 batteries of Horse and 150 batteries of Field Artillery.¹ According to official statements this gives us a proportion of $5\frac{1}{2}$ guns per thousand sabres and bayonets, which compares not unfavourably with the average of Continental armies. The situation just described is of very recent creation. Ten years ago the strength of the artillery was scarcely one-half of what it is at present. In 1894 the number of R.H.A. batteries was 20, the number of R.F.A. batteries 80. The figures of to-day show an increase of 8 Horse and 70 Field Batteries. The addition of these 78 new batteries is due to the foresight of Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Brodrick, and is one of the most satisfactory features of the military reforms of the last decade. But, as will be shown, this increase, substantial though it is, has not given us an artillery force equal to our needs.

In the first place the 178 batteries themselves

¹ Including 8 Howitzer Batteries.

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are incomplete, and many of them would be unavailable for war on mobilisation. No arm requires a larger addition of men, horses, and materials, on mobilisation, than the Artillery. For every man with the guns, something like three men are required to bring the batteries up to war strength, to man the ammunition wagons, and to form the parks which are essential for the proper supply of the batteries in the field. The actual number of wagons with the batteries must also be increased, and the number of horses nearly doubled.¹

It is obvious that to supply these needs the Artillery ought to be capable of great and rapid expansion in time of war, and ought to be provided with an exceptionally large reserve. Unfortunately, not only has it no such abnormally large reserve, but it actually possesses a smaller proportion of reserve than any other important branch of the Army. The figures are as follows:—

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|--------|
| Horse and Field Artillery with the colours | | | | | |
| (October, 1905) | . | . | . | . | 30,550 |
| Reserve | . | . | . | . | 7,286 |

THE REASON FOR THE SHORTAGE OF THE ARTILLERY RESERVES.

The reason for this unfortunate shortage is two-fold. In the first place, the duty of making proper provision for ammunition trains and parks and for the supply of additional wagons, was for many years neglected. A somewhat unfortunate attempt was made by Mr. Stanhope to apply a partial remedy, by allocating a certain number of field batteries to the performance of the duties of ammunition columns in time of war. But this plan, as might have been anticipated, proved a failure, and it was not till some years later that the

¹ The introduction of the new field gun with its heavy fixed ammunition has rendered a further increase of personnel and of ammunition wagons absolutely necessary.

work of providing the necessary supplement to the Artillery was seriously taken in hand. It was then too late to overtake in a hurry the deficiencies due to past neglect. The addition of 78 batteries had naturally disturbed the balance of men with the colours and with the Reserve respectively, to an extent which only lapse of years could redress. New batteries necessarily come into existence without any reserve, and many years are required to create the full contingent of reservists.¹

The gravity of the situation caused by the deficiency of the Reserve of the Royal Artillery has long been evident to the War Office. Indeed, in view of what took place in 1899, it was impossible to ignore the facts of the situation. As the present writer had ventured to predict, the mobilisation of the Horse and Field Artillery, as a whole, proved impossible. From the very beginning, drafts had to be made upon the batteries standing low upon the list, for the officers and men required for the batteries first on the roster, and for the ammunition columns and parks of the brigades sent to the front. Long before the bottom of the list was reached, the personnel of the batteries left at home was exhausted and the batteries reduced to mere names in the Army List. At the same time, the whole of the Reserve was exhausted in furnishing a supplement to the incomplete batteries, and in the formation of the ammunition columns and parks.

How complete was the failure may be realised from one or two illustrations. The 78th Field Battery had only 85 men fit for service, and was compelled to take 85 from the Reserve. The 37th

¹ The recent decision to alter the term of enlistment for the Horse and Field Artillery from three years with the colours and nine years with the Reserve to six years with the colours and six years with the Reserve, will greatly reduce the reserve of the Artillery; and the disbanding of 3,800 trained artillerists will increase the mischief which must inevitably result from this ill-considered and retrograde step.

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Field Battery required 98 reservists; the 20th Field Battery 101. The ammunition columns of the last brigades were entirely composed of extraneous elements, and, as has been stated, many of the batteries could not be mobilised at all.¹

Naturally, the existence of such a state of things was a matter of concern to the War Office authorities, and every effort was made to augment the available reserve of the artillery. In order to promote the growth of the Reserve, in 1904 the three years' term of enlistment was retained for the Horse and Field Artillery after it had been abandoned for the Garrison Artillery, the Cavalry, and the Infantry of the Line. But this method of supplementing the Reserve was slow in its operation, and could not under any circumstances supply the whole need. It was necessary to adopt other expedients. What those expedients were will be described in the following pages. It will be seen that they involved a call upon the Auxiliary Forces, both Militia and Volunteers. Before proceeding to examine these proposals, however, it is necessary to revert for a moment to the general question of the strength of the Artillery, and its efficiency for war purposes; for without a clear idea on this subject it is impossible to approach the subject of Auxiliary Field Artillery, to which this chapter is devoted.

THE INDIAN ARMY AND THE AUXILIARY FORCES.

It has been explained that if the needs of the Regular Army alone are taken into consideration, our artillery, if available in its entirety, would not be insufficient. It must not be forgotten, however, that the Regular Army by no means represents the whole of the force on which the Empire is

¹ Attention was drawn to this question and details of the failure of the system were given by the Author in 1900. See *The War Office, the Army and the Empire* (Cassell & Co.), pp. 57 to 63.

supposed to depend in time of war. The Indian Army is without horse or field artillery; it is provided with a small number of mountain batteries, but it has no regular artillery equipment in the modern and ordinary sense. If the Indian Army is to go into the field with an adequate artillery support, that artillery must be drawn from the 178 batteries of Horse and Field Artillery which appear in the Army List.

But, unfortunately, this is only a partial statement of the extent of our deficiencies. We maintain at home at the present time a force of Cavalry and Infantry numbering no less than 287,222.¹ This immense force is wholly unprovided with field artillery, with the exception of two 4-gun horse artillery batteries of the Honourable Artillery Company, and a brigade of three 4-gun batteries of the Lancashire Militia Field Artillery.

There are also a number of so-called heavy batteries of Volunteers armed with the 4·7-in. gun, and a few batteries of the same force which are included under the same denomination, but which practise—with the knowledge of the War Office, though in defiance of its regulations—with a field gun. As, however, this field gun is of a type which caused it to be regarded as the worst gun in Europe when it was in actual use twenty-five years ago, and as it has become totally obsolete as a weapon of war, these batteries cannot be regarded as furnishing any direct contribution to the field artillery available for fighting purposes.

THE PROVISION OF AMMUNITION TRAINS BY THE MILITIA.

It must not be supposed, however, that the batteries above referred to represent the whole personnel of the artillery of the Auxiliary Forces.

¹ Militia (infantry) 77,881, Yeomanry 25,341, Volunteers (infantry) 184,000.

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It is remarkable that no less than 14,900 of the Militia and over 30,000 of the Volunteers belong to that arm. What use, if any, can be made of this large force of willing men? It has already been suggested that the Militia Garrison Artillery might be of great use if they were utilised as a supplement to the regular batteries in time of war, and in the year 1905 a scheme was prepared by the War Office, which had for its object the utilisation of a large number of surplus batteries of Militia Garrison Artillery for the supply of the personnel of ammunition columns to the regular artillery in time of war. The Militia companies in question, having no longer any useful function to perform as garrison artillery—owing to the abandonment of the coast batteries to which they were originally assigned—were to be invited to accept service as adjuncts to the Royal Artillery. They were to be trained during the winter at the Royal Artillery headquarters, and were to be made immediately available on mobilisation. The plan had great and obvious advantages, the principal, and, indeed, the only objection to it being that the officers and men concerned might not desire to transfer their services from a combatant, to what is primarily a non-combatant branch of the Service. Time alone, however, can show how such a proposition will be received by officers and men.¹

HOW THE ARTILLERY OF THE AUXILIARY FORCES CAN BE UTILISED.

Assuming, however, that a portion of the Artillery Militia can be utilised for the purposes specified above, there remains the question of what is to be done with the rest of the artillery of the Auxiliary Forces. A portion, beyond doubt,

¹ The Secretary of State for War, Mr. Haldane, announced on the 12th July, 1906, that he proposed to adopt the scheme of 1905, and to utilise the Garrison Artillery Militia in the manner suggested.

will always be required, and can with much advantage be employed to man the guns in the few fortresses which we maintain in this country. Both the Militia and the Volunteers are capable of performing excellent service as garrison gunners, provided a sufficient expert staff be maintained and adequate opportunity be given for practice. The working of heavy guns is to a great extent a matter dependent upon the correct and scientific handling of machinery, and there are large numbers of men in the Militia, and perhaps an even larger proportion in the Volunteers, who by their training have acquired a special aptitude for this class of work. A fortress gunner is all the better for being localised. The man who is familiar with every object within range of his battery, who knows its distance and recognises its form in any condition of wind and weather, of daylight or darkness, is the best man for the work; and the more frequently the Militia and Volunteers are trained in the neighbourhood of their homes, the better. Unfortunately, as has been pointed out, little or no principle has been imported into the disposition of Militia and Volunteer artillery corps, and in many cases Infantry battalions exist where artillery are required, and *vice versâ*. Despite these mistakes, however, the fact remains that we have a supply of Militia and Volunteer artillery amply sufficient for the needs of our fortresses, and that, after all requirements have been met, there is a large surplus of men who, under existing conditions, fulfil no useful purpose and are maintained without any advantage to the nation.

If this be the case, and if it be also true, as has been demonstrated above, that we are maintaining a very large force of Cavalry and Infantry wholly unprovided with field artillery, the question naturally arises whether it be not possible to utilise that portion of the Militia and Volunteer artillery

which is at present redundant and therefore useless, for the purpose of supplying the Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers with the field artillery which they will undoubtedly require if they are ever engaged in serious war.

CAN FIELD BATTERIES OF THE AUXILIARY
FORCES BE MADE EFFICIENT ?

The question is one which has been often and hotly debated. There are two schools of thought which are violently opposed to one another. In the opinion of one school it is, and must always be impossible to create a highly specialised arm, such as modern field artillery, under the conditions which necessarily attach to service in the Militia and the Volunteers respectively. There is no room, say the representatives of this class, for second-rate artillery in a modern battle ; first-rate artillery will destroy second-rate artillery, and Militia or Volunteer artillery must always, *ex necessitate casus*, be second rate.

If this argument be sound, and there is much to be said in favour of it, there is but one conclusion to be drawn from it, namely, that all Militia and Volunteer field batteries now existing should be abolished, and that no new ones should be created. It is somewhat curious, however, to find that few of those who are most insistent in establishing the premises are prepared in practice to accept the conclusion ; and their case is considerably weakened in consequence.

On the other hand, there is a school which recognises to the full the grave deficiency in the numbers of our field artillery and boldly accepts the conclusion that the deficit can be, and ought to be supplied by the Militia and the Volunteers. It is of great importance that the issue which undoubtedly exists between these two schools of

thought should be decided, and should be decided upon purely military grounds; in other words, that no policy, however popular, should be adopted which does not result in giving us batteries that, in the event of war, will hold their own against, or destroy the batteries of the enemy.

MILITIA FIELD ARTILLERY.

It is worth while considering this problem dispassionately. For some time past there has existed a single brigade of Militia Field Artillery, namely, the Lancashire Militia Field Artillery Brigade. Full reports as to the efficiency of these batteries have been received annually. Considering the difficulties under which officers and men perform their duties, the short time devoted to practice, and the difficulty of obtaining range accommodation, the results have been very creditable. It would be an exaggeration to pretend that any of the reports received represent the batteries as having reached a pitch of efficiency comparable to that of a regular battery. This fact, however, is not conclusive as to the inability of the batteries to act as substitutes for regular batteries in time of war. It is only reasonable to suppose that the standard of efficiency is capable of great improvement provided time be given for systematic and prolonged instruction. It is assumed by all who regard the Auxiliary Forces as capable of taking an effective part in war, that a considerable period must, of necessity, elapse between the outbreak of hostilities and the utilisation of auxiliary units. This period, it is held, may be utilised with such advantage as to remove all the disabilities due to inadequate training. It is not necessary to question this assumption here, though it is necessary to note the limitation which its acceptance imposes upon the war value of the particular batteries under discussion, and of the

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Auxiliary Forces generally. The acceptance of the view carries with it, as a corollary, the certainty that if the theory breaks down and an enemy succeeds in fighting us at his convenience, and not at ours, we shall be in great danger.

COST AND COMPOSITION OF MILITIA FIELD BATTERIES.

But to return to the examination of the Militia Field Artillery as at present existing, it is desirable, and indeed essential, to ask how far these so-called Militia field batteries really represent the bulk of the Artillery of the Auxiliary Forces.

The following particulars of the Lancashire Militia Field Artillery Brigade are remarkable and instructive:—

NUMBER OF OFFICERS, NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS, AND MEN IN THE BRIGADE WHO ARE SERVING, OR WHO HAVE SERVED, IN THE REGULAR ARMY (JUNE, 1906).

| | Belonging to Regular Army. | Who have served in Regular Army. | Total. |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Officers . . . | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Warrant Officers . . | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| N.C.O.'s . . . | 36 | 4 | 40 |
| Trumpeters . . . | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| Gunners, &c. . . | 76 | 30 | 106 |
| | <hr/> 122 | <hr/> 35 | <hr/> 157 |
| | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> |

The total strength of the brigade in 1905 was 428 all ranks, of whom 380 were present at training. It is to be observed, therefore, that no less than 41 per cent. of the officers and men present at training were soldiers of the Regular Army. It is evident that these batteries, whatever may be their degree of excellence, are not Militia batteries at all. They are batteries which exist in strict dependence upon the Regular Army. It is conceivable that if the regular element were removed,

the batteries would continue to render good service, but it is not reasonable to assume that they would do so. In other words, the experiment made with these Lancashire batteries proves something, but it does not prove all that many of those who desire to extend it are in the habit of assuming. The inference that may justly be drawn from the experiment is in strict conformity with the view which nearly all artillerymen of experience would express *a priori*.

In every field battery a proportion of the non-commissioned officers and men, variously estimated as from 30 per cent. to 35 per cent. of the whole, are what may be termed "skilled ratings." They include the gun-layers, the range-takers, and the various mechanics—wheelers, farriers, smiths, harness-makers, etc., whose services are in constant request. The remainder of the personnel may be men of shorter service and less training than the skilled ratings referred to. They must be disciplined, they must be accustomed to the work they have to perform, and they must, especially since the introduction of the quick-firing gun, be men of good physique and great power of endurance. As long as the personnel of a battery remains at its full establishment the guns can be worked under these conditions. It is obvious, however, that in a unit composed to the extent of 60 per cent. of unskilled men, the waste of war may produce much more serious consequences than in a unit in which there is a large number of fully trained "numbers" to take the place of those disabled by wounds and disease. It is equally obvious that in a battery so constituted, it is of paramount importance that the officers and non-commissioned officers should be of the highest quality. It is not necessary to assert that they must be regular soldiers. The value to a fighting man depends upon what he is, and not upon what he is called. But from whatever branch of the

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Service the officers and non-commissioned officers are drawn, it is absolutely essential that they should be experts in their profession, and should, moreover, be capable of establishing and maintaining a high standard of discipline in their commands.

The Lancashire Militia Field Batteries are costly, though they naturally cost less than a battery of regular artillery. But it is necessary in this, as in so many other instances, to bear in mind the all-important truth that any economy which leads to the creation of units which will be defeated in time of war, is an extravagance of the worst kind.¹

THE CONDITIONS WHICH MILITIA BATTERIES OUGHT TO FULFIL.

If, therefore, the arguments of those who desire to increase the number of Militia Field Batteries are to prevail, the advocates of the change must be prepared to show—

(a) That the batteries as at present constituted are or can be made fit for war.

(b) That the percentage of regular officers, non-commissioned officers, and men which exists in the three Lancashire batteries can as a matter of fact be maintained in the additional batteries which it is proposed to create.

Or alternatively—

(c) That the maintenance of the existing proportion of Regulars is not essential to the efficiency of the batteries.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XXIV.

1. Our Horse and Field Batteries, if all available on mobilisation, would suffice for the needs of the Regular Army.

¹ The annual cost of a Regular Field Battery in the Line establishment, 6 guns (4 guns horsed), is £13,000; of a Militia Battery, with 4 guns, occasionally horsed, £6,500.

2. Our Horse and Field Batteries are not all available on mobilisation owing to shortness of reserves.

3. The insufficiency of the reserves of the artillery is due partly to past neglect, but principally to the great increase in the number of batteries.

4. The mobilisation of 1899 furnished a striking proof of the inadequacy of our artillery reserve.

5. The War Office is well aware of the insufficiency of our artillery reserves, and has endeavoured to increase the number of men available.

6. The recent increase in the length of service of the artillery will reduce the reserve. The reduction of personnel will aggravate the situation.

7. The best method of supplementing the artillery reserve is to draw upon the Auxiliary Forces.

8. The Auxiliary Forces and the Indian Army are practically unprovided with field artillery.

9. The question of whether Auxiliary Field Artillery can with advantage be created excites much controversy.

10. An experiment has been made of which the actual results seem doubtful.

11. The experiment is worth pursuing.

CHAPTER XXV

FIELD ARTILLERY OF THE AUXILIARY FORCES: PART II

VOLUNTEER FIELD BATTERIES.

THE question of the utilisation of the Volunteer Artillery to furnish field batteries stands in some respects upon the same footing as that of the Artillery Militia. But the cases, though similar, are not identical. There are essential differences between the Volunteers and the Militia which must not be forgotten. In the first place, the Militia, even under existing law, may be regarded as available in units for service abroad in time of war. The Volunteers are not so available, and must therefore be utilised, if it all—

(a) As units capable of being employed in war in Great Britain ;

or—

(b) As drafts for regular batteries employed outside Great Britain.

Secondly, the training of the Volunteers is less than that of the Militia.

These two considerations tend to establish a preference in favour of the Militia as against the Volunteers, as the source from which additional field artillery should be drawn. But there is a third consideration which must not be overlooked, and which to some extent reverses the presumption just established.

Admittedly the Volunteers contain a large proportion of skilled and educated men, artificers and workmen, trained to the use and adjustment of delicate machines—and the new field gun is a delicate machine.

It has been said that there is a body of opinion in favour of adding to the number of Militia field batteries. There is at least an equally numerous section which strongly advocates the creation of Volunteer field batteries, either instead of, or in addition to Militia batteries. Such being the case, it is desirable to explain briefly what is the existing condition of affairs with regard to the Volunteer Artillery, and to state what action has been taken or contemplated by the Army Council in the direction of giving effect to the views of those who desire to transform a portion of the Volunteer Artillery into field batteries.

In 1905 the Volunteer Artillery numbered no less than 30,000 men, comprised in 68 units. No scheme of mobilisation has yet found a place for the whole of these units, and there can be little doubt that under present conditions a considerable proportion of the Volunteer Artillery are not in a position to render effective service in time of war. This is not because the Volunteer Artillery are incompetent or inefficient. On the contrary, some of the garrison companies are exceedingly good, and there can be no doubt at all that, with a comparatively short training in a fortress, they would become a most valuable addition to our coast-defence forces, were such defences required. It must not be forgotten, however, that not only has the number of fortified places on the coast of the United Kingdom been greatly reduced, and reduced intentionally as the result of a considered policy, but that the number of guns in the places which remain has also been greatly reduced. It is evident, therefore, that the garrison branch of the

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Volunteer Artillery is at least adequate in numbers for any duties it may be called upon to perform in the defence of strong places at home.

The remainder of the force, consisting of "batteries of position," is undoubtedly more than adequate in point of numbers to fulfil the duties likely to be imposed upon them in the event of mobilisation. Already a number of batteries have been armed with the 4·7-in. gun, while others are still exercising with obsolete weapons which are not only useless for purposes of modern warfare, but are of small value even for the purposes of instruction.

That such a state of things should exist is no doubt both lamentable and discreditable. Its existence is due to the fact that in the past the Volunteer Force has been allowed to grow up without any sort of intelligent direction or control. Companies and batteries have been formed, not because they were required or because the locality in which they were raised was the most convenient from the military point of view. It has already been pointed out that both in the Militia and in the Volunteers the creation of units was for a long time allowed to proceed with an almost entire disregard of military considerations, and this unfortunate policy is now bearing fruit. Recrimination is not of much use; the object to be aimed at is to remedy, as far as may be, the errors of the past; and to remedy them with the least possible dislocation of existing arrangements, the least possible sacrifice of good material. The task is a difficult one, and can easily be made impossible by an absence of goodwill and good sense on the part of the military authorities on the one hand, or of the Volunteers on the other.

But with goodwill and good sense a great deal can be accomplished, as the following example will demonstrate:—

WHAT MAY BE DONE WITH THE VOLUNTEER
ARTILLERY.

Among the Volunteer batteries classed as batteries of position are some which, not having received the heavy 4·7-in. gun, have been left in possession of the 16-pr. M.L., a weapon which may be briefly described as a bad gun in its time, and a gun which has been obsolete for purposes of war for many years. In its day the 16-pr. was a field gun. But as it has never been part of the policy of the War Office that the Volunteers should furnish field batteries, those corps which retained the 16-pr. were instructed to drill with it as if it were a heavy gun, and they were designated and dealt with as batteries of position.

It was not unnatural that the Volunteers should have disliked an arrangement which condemned them to a sterile and unintelligent occupation, and that in some cases they should have sought to depart from the strict observance of regulations the reasons for which they could not appreciate, but of which they felt the baneful effect.

As a matter of fact, certain corps did so far depart from the regulations as to begin drilling and practising as field batteries, and not as batteries of position. They raised considerable sums by private effort; they hired horses, built stables, procured ranges, and, in some cases, provided 15-pr. B.L. guns in addition to their regular armament. Thus equipped, they regularly drilled as field batteries, and regarded themselves as field artillerymen.

The proceeding was a clear violation of orders, and naturally met with grave disapproval at the War Office; nor was this disapproval unreasonable. It was not desired to raise additional field batteries, and if such a need had existed, it was not by the multiplication of these very inefficiently trained and equipped Volunteer units that it could best be met.

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Orders were sent to the commanding officers of the units in question prohibiting the continuance of the illicit methods of training. These orders were received with great regret by the officers commanding the batteries in question. They called attention to the fact that in some cases inspecting officers had not only inspected the batteries as field batteries, but had reported favourably upon the work done. They further pointed out that their corps had incurred considerable expense for the purpose of making themselves efficient as field batteries, and that the money had been spent, if not with the approval of the authorities, at any rate without interference on their part. It is not necessary here to inquire into the exact merits of what seemed likely at one time to become a serious cause of difference. That the batteries were acting in contravention of the regulations is beyond dispute; that despite their undoubted zeal and goodwill they were not, and indeed are not, capable of taking the field under modern conditions, is also beyond dispute. That year after year they were permitted, if not encouraged, to train in a manner not contemplated by the regulations is also certain; and it is equally certain that this indulgence, for whatever reason accorded, did undoubtedly encourage both officers and men to regard themselves as Volunteer Field Artillery.

That such an anomalous state of things could not, with advantage, continue indefinitely, was apparent. Experienced officers knew perfectly well that the batteries as constituted could not live for half an hour in an artillery contest. The Volunteers serving in the batteries complained, and not unnaturally, of being condemned to work with obsolete guns and under conditions which they themselves knew were not calculated to result in true efficiency. It was obviously necessary that some step should be taken, either backwards or forwards.

THE QUESTION OF "ABOLITION" OR
"IMPROVEMENT."

In the year 1905 a step was taken, and with very interesting results. The anomalous position of these batteries was pointed out by the Secretary of State, and he sought the opinion of his military advisers as to what was the proper course to pursue. It was evidently a case of "mending or ending." To abolish the batteries was an intelligible policy; to take steps to render them efficient for war was an intelligible policy; but to leave them as they were was to perpetuate a fraud upon the nation, and to multiply causes of friction and misunderstanding. The Secretary of State, therefore, asked for advice as to which of the only two possible courses should be adopted. Some strong reasons were given in favour of abolition, principally on the ground that under no conceivable conditions could Volunteer field batteries be rendered fit for service in the field. The use of modern field guns, it was held, was a highly specialised art, and this art could never be acquired by troops with so slight a training as that with which Volunteers must perforce rest content.

Such an opinion as this was obviously entitled to great weight, but its acceptance involved an obvious corollary—namely, the immediate reduction of the batteries affected, or their transformation into heavy batteries, with a rigorous enforcement of the regulations governing the drill of such batteries.

It appeared, however, that this advice was to a certain extent meant to be regarded as academic, a mere counsel of perfection, and, though the reasons for abolition were stated with much force, the actual issue of the necessary orders for abolition was not recommended to the Secretary of State.

It therefore became necessary to examine the problem anew on the basis of the retention of the

batteries. To keep them in the state of inefficiency which had been so generally condemned was out of the question. Was it possible to improve them so as to make them of real value in war time? That was the question which had now to be considered.

By an important section of military opinion the question was answered in the negative. There were, however, some reasons for thinking that this opinion did not fully take into account what might be accomplished if the Volunteers were ready to submit to new conditions.

The general proposition that Volunteer field batteries cannot serve effectively in war might be accepted as the dictum of authority, but only as long as a particular instance to the contrary could not be produced.

THE "HONOURABLE ARTILLERY COMPANY."

It is remarkable that such a contrary instance did exist. The Hon. Artillery Company, although its conditions of enlistment and service are peculiar, is to all intents and purposes a Volunteer corps, receiving capitation grant as such, and serving under conditions similar to, though not actually identical with those which govern the bulk of the Volunteers.

The H.A.C. has two horse-artillery batteries, and one of these batteries went to South Africa as a unit under its own officers, and served through a great part of the war. Here, then, was a Volunteer field battery which had actually taken part in war. What was its record? Was it good or bad? There could be but one answer to that question. It was exceedingly good. On this point, the testimony of every one entitled to express an opinion was uniform. Every officer under whose orders the battery had been placed spoke in terms of praise of its conduct on the march, in camp, and under

fire. The discipline was good ; the shooting was good. The battery worked with the regular batteries, not only without discredit, but with distinction. An inquiry into the performances of the battery at home, and under peace conditions, led to an equally satisfactory result. The officer commanding the Royal Artillery on Salisbury Plain felt himself compelled to place the H.A.C. batteries in the first class. It was apparent, therefore, that though this particular Volunteer battery may not have attained ideal excellence, it would be a serious mis-statement to say that it was not fit to take the field.

A PATRIOTIC EXAMPLE.

But if one Volunteer battery could achieve this degree of excellence, was it not possible that others might do the same ? It seemed at least possible, provided the batteries chosen for the experiment were composed of specially selected officers and men, and were given proper opportunities for practice and training, and provided that officers and men were willing to take advantage of those opportunities. The experiment, at any rate, was worth trying. In Appendix V. will be found a portion of the correspondence which took place between the authorities at the War Office and two colonels of Volunteer Artillery. The correspondence is interesting because it affords ample proof of the correctness of the opinion which the author has frequently advanced, to the effect that Volunteer officers, if approached in a reasonable spirit, will be the first to prefer quality to quantity in their commands, and will assist the War Office in its endeavours towards improvement. What took place was, briefly, as follows : The officers commanding the 1st Lanarkshire Artillery Volunteers and the 4th West Riding of Yorkshire Artillery

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Volunteers¹ were invited to confer with the War Office authorities with regard to the future of the batteries under their command. The Lanarkshire contained ten 4-gun batteries armed with the obsolete 16-pr. M.-L. gun. The West Riding corps had four batteries similarly equipped. Both corps were drilling as field artillery, and both corps, despite the zeal and intelligence of officers and men, were, in consequence of the antiquated and absurd nature of their armament, absolutely useless for purposes of war. The commanding officers were informed that, in the opinion of the Army Council, the continued maintenance of their corps under existing conditions could not be justified; but that, provided they were prepared to conform to regulations laid down by the War Office, with the object of increasing efficiency without addition to cost, the Department would second their efforts to increase the efficiency of their batteries in every possible way.

Briefly, the conditions were as follows :—

(a) That the total expenditure upon the batteries out of public funds should not be increased.

(b) That the batteries should attain a standard of efficiency equal to that of the Hon. Artillery Company's batteries.

The commanding officers not only readily agreed to these proposals, but they offered more than the War Office had asked. The following are the proposals put forward, and agreed to by both the officers concerned :—

1. The corps to be reduced by the selection of the requisite number of officers and men necessary to constitute a brigade of field artillery from the existing *personnel*; retaining only those who were thoroughly efficient, physically fit for active service and willing to comply with the additional obligations.

¹ These titles practically mean Glasgow and Sheffield.

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2. Every officer and man retained to be enlisted for a period of not less than four years, to join the Army Reserve and be subject to the King's Regulations.

3. A compulsory attendance in camp for at least fourteen days per annum and additional drills, to be enforced.

4. Every member of the brigade to pass an annual medical inspection.

5. Physical drill to be a branch of the training.

6. Officers, non-commissioned officers, and drivers to pass riding school.

7. Additional facilities to be afforded for any officer wishing to be attached to the regular batteries during the active drill season.

8. Stable accommodation and riding school to be augmented to the satisfaction of the authorities.

9. Armament to be 12 field guns (per brigade) with complete equipment, *personnel* per battery to be—

1 major.

1 captain.

2 subalterns.

120 men.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of this proposal, or the bearing which it may have upon the future of the Volunteer Force. It will be observed that it constitutes the first step towards the adoption of the system which has had such admirable results in the case of the Imperial Yeomanry. Quality is made the first desideratum; quantity the second. In the Yeomanry the adoption of this principle has enormously improved the quality, while it has actually increased the quantity—a consequence which will certainly follow in the Volunteers as soon as the principle is adopted. In the batteries in question there would undoubtedly have been a reduction in the first instance, and this the commanding officers were willing to accept. The ten batteries of the Lanark-

shire would probably have been reduced to six, the four batteries of the West Yorkshire to three, or perhaps, in the first instance, to two. But the gain in efficiency would have far outweighed the loss of numbers. Officers and men would have been selected from among many candidates; the training would have been effective, the physique of all concerned good.

It will be observed that the commanding officers were prepared to make it a condition of enlistment that men should join the Army Reserve. Such a condition would probably have been *ultra vires*, though its value, if it could be enforced, would be great. But there was, and is, no reason why men should not join the Army Reserve voluntarily. They would receive a substantial retaining fee, and an accession of trained men to the Reserve of the Royal Horse and Field Artillery is greatly needed.

A few words only are required to complete the record of this very interesting episode. The Army Council accepted the offer of the commanding officers, and it was decided to supply the batteries with the Ehrhardt quick-firing gun and with an ample supply of ammunition. The commanding officers were informed of the decision of the Army Council, and nothing remained but to proceed with the scheme. Unfortunately, the tradition of continuity, which usually and happily prevails in matters of this kind, was in this instance set aside by the Administration which took office in December, 1905. The Lanarkshire and Yorkshire batteries were left in possession of their 16-pr. guns, and public money is still being wasted upon performances alike dangerous to the country and discouraging to the officers and men concerned.¹

¹ It is inevitable that this, like many other forward movements which were begun in 1904-5 and arrested in 1906, must ultimately be continued. It is out of the question that the batteries should remain as they are. It is none the less unfortunate that the necessary reform has been delayed.

AUXILIARY BATTERIES SHOULD SUPPLEMENT
REGULAR BATTERIES.

Enough has perhaps been said to show that, under proper conditions, a certain number of field batteries of high quality can be obtained from the Volunteers; and that additional batteries, in some respects not quite so efficient, can be obtained from the Militia. But it would be a great mistake to suppose that the admission of these two statements exhausts the important question which has formed the subject of this and the preceding chapter.

It is impossible to ignore the fact that the policy of creating Militia and Volunteer field batteries is strongly and consistently opposed by soldiers of experience, whose opinion is entitled to great weight. Inquiry will generally elucidate the fact that this opposition is due, not so much to any objection to the creation of the new batteries *per se*, as to a firm conviction that the existence of the new units will be made an excuse and an occasion for weakening and partially destroying the Regular Batteries. It is impossible to contend, in view of the utterly uninstructed condition of public opinion with regard to all military questions, and of the readiness of Parliament and the public to accept any scheme which is both cheap and popular, that these apprehensions are unreasonable. It would indeed be a folly almost amounting to a crime, if any hasty action were to be taken in the direction of *substituting* Militia or Volunteer batteries for Regular Batteries.

It must be remembered in the first place that by universal admission we are, at this moment, very short of artillery; that, as already pointed out, we are actually maintaining no less than 287,000 bayonets and sabres with only 20 field guns to support them. Obviously, therefore, the time has not come for substituting new batteries for old. The need is for

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an increase. Again, to replace what is notoriously very good by what is less good is not sound policy. That the Field Artillery of the Auxiliary Forces is at the present moment capable of taking the place of the Regular Batteries cannot be seriously contended. It is suggested, however, that under a new organisation the standard of the former may be brought up to that of the latter. The assertion is a bold one, and its correctness remains to be proved. If a change is in contemplation, it is in this case mere common sense to be "on with the new love before we are off with the old." If at the end of five years' time the new batteries can be shown to be equal to the old ones in efficiency, to be cheaper and as readily available in time of war, then, and not till then, will it be reasonable to consider the wisdom of increasing the number of the new, and of decreasing the number of the old. But that time has not yet arrived, nor is there any certainty that it ever will arrive. There are good reasons for making experiments both with the Militia and the Volunteers; but that is all that can justly be said.

THE PERSONNEL OF A FIELD BATTERY.

One word is required in connection with the passage in the preceding chapter which deals with the personnel of a field battery. It has been pointed out that while a high training is necessary for 30 to 35 per cent. of the personnel, a less strenuous and complete training is sufficient for the remainder. This fact tends, like so many others, to establish the principle which lay at the root of the proposals made to Parliament in 1904. In the Artillery, as in every other branch of the Service, it is not only possible, but it is desirable, to maintain or to increase the number of units or cadres, and at the same time to diminish the personnel of those units. In the Artillery, as in the Infantry, the true policy

is to maintain those units which are required for foreign service in time of peace at their full establishment, and at the same time to reduce the establishment of those units which are not so required; coupling the reduction of establishment with a reduction of the term of colour service for a certain proportion of the men composing the unit.

Provided that the officers, non-commissioned officers, and "skilled ratings" of the batteries not required for India and the Colonies are maintained at the highest level of efficiency, there is no reason whatever why the peace establishment of such batteries should not be reduced, or why two-thirds of the men should not be enlisted for short service. That this is the true way to create Militia field batteries is certain; but here, as in the case of the Infantry, the fact must be recognised that the Regular units must be preserved and that the Militia batteries—under whatever title they may appear in the Army List—must be placed on the same footing as the short-service batteries of the Regular Army. The term of service is a matter for the military authorities to decide. If twelve months be sufficient for the regular soldier, it is sufficient and not too much for the militiaman. If, in the opinion of competent soldiers, six months is adequate, a six months' term should be adopted. But the one solution which should not be adopted, however popular, is that which tends to create two classes of Artillery, the one efficient and capable of winning in the field, the other destined to "play about" and to amuse the populace in time of peace, but destined to defeat in the day of battle.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XXV.

1. The Volunteer Field Artillery under existing conditions is useless.
2. The useless batteries must be either abolished or improved.

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3. The efficiency of the H.A.C. batteries is an argument in favour of retaining and improving some of the Volunteer field batteries, provided the officers and men concerned are prepared to agree to the necessary conditions.

4. There is evidence that the officers and men are ready to agree to the necessary conditions.

5. The experiment of improving Volunteer field batteries was sanctioned by the Army Council in 1905, but has been stopped.

6. It is permissible to diminish the establishment of a battery in peace time, provided that an adequate number of "skilled ratings" are retained, and that the remainder of the rank and file are rapidly passed to the Reserve after a short period of active service.

7. Any Auxiliary field artillery which may be formed should be a supplement to and not a substitute for the Regular artillery.

CHAPTER XXVI

BARRACKS AND BARRACK POLICY: PART I

THE PRESENT CONDITION OF OUR BARRACKS.

THE barrack accommodation of the British Army at home is bad. The cost of providing it has been great, and the result is incommensurate with the expenditure. Of late years there has been a considerable improvement in the accommodation provided for the soldier, but the provision is still unsatisfactory. The improvements which have taken place are for the most part the outcome of a genuine desire to make barrack life agreeable, and to raise the standard of comfort and convenience in the home of the soldier. Much has been accomplished, but much still remains to be done. The old truth, that it is not wise to add new cloth to an old garment, finds abundant illustration in many of our old barracks. The original design was bad, and the attempt to adapt buildings erected fifty, a hundred, and, in some cases, a hundred and fifty years ago, to modern requirements is usually as disappointing as it is extravagant. Nor can it be said with truth that even the most modern barracks are economical in construction, attractive in design, or remarkable for comfort and convenience. How bad some of the old barracks are can only be realised by those who have time and inclination to make a thorough examination of them. It is no exaggeration

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to say that the condition of the barracks at Norwich, which date from 1785, at Coventry, which are even older, and, indeed, of many others, is lamentable.

The Wellington Barracks in St. James's Park are a disgrace to the metropolis, and utterly unworthy of being the headquarters and the home of two battalions of the King's Guards. In these, and many other barracks there is an absence of modern conveniences and of reasonable comfort, which is specially remarkable in an age in which the art of making provision for large numbers of persons, under one roof, has made rapid and unprecedented progress. It is impossible to inspect a modern hospital, workhouse, or asylum—to say nothing of the great schools, institutions, and public lodging-houses which are growing up all over the country—and not to wish that the same ingenuity and skill which have been devoted to their construction had been applied to the barracks in which our soldiers live. For, indeed, it is a melancholy fact that it is not only the old barracks which leave much to be desired. Recent structures, such as the barracks at Colchester and Tidworth, are, save in some minor details, reproductions of old designs. There are improvements, no doubt. It is a good thing to have dining-rooms for the men, and thus to get rid of the old plan of messing in the sleeping-rooms. It is a good thing to have specially designed recreation-rooms; but these, after all, are bare essentials. In the main, the old style of barrack has been reproduced, and accommodation for both officers and men is still, in many respects, rudimentary in the extreme.

AN EXAMPLE FROM WINCHESTER.

How little originality and forethought have been devoted to the task of barrack construction is well illustrated by the case of the Depot of the 60th

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Rifles and Rifle Brigade at Winchester. By a stroke of good fortune nearly the whole of the depot buildings were burnt to the ground some years ago. The question of replacing them had to be considered. It was well known that the old buildings were not only exceedingly inconvenient, but very badly situated, being far from any recreation-ground or exercise-ground. It was hoped, and it was naturally expected, that the new building would rise, extended and improved, upon another site. The expectation was disappointed. The barrack was reconstructed, yard for yard, upon the old site. No provision for a hospital was made, and it has been found necessary to appropriate a portion of the officers' quarters block for the purpose. Being a large training depot, the number of non-commissioned officers in the barracks is very great. This fact was apparently forgotten, and no proper non-commissioned officers' mess was included in the new design. There is an exceptionally large number of sergeants in the depot. For their accommodation an ordinary room in barracks has been set aside. It is divided longitudinally by a curtain. On one side of the curtain is a bagatelle-table—that is the recreation-room. On the other side is a dining-table—that is the mess-room. By dint of having two successive meals, dinner can be provided. The depot is still three miles from its only recreation-ground, and a mile from its exercise-ground. Such are the new barracks at Winchester.

The barracks at Colchester and Tidworth are, as stated, somewhat of an improvement upon the older buildings. But in neither case has any serious step been made to depart from old methods or to introduce real comfort into the accommodation provided for officers and men. The married officers' quarters at Tidworth are most unsightly and inconvenient buildings. The barrack

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rooms at both places are bleak and comfortless. The accommodation provided for the non-commissioned officers is inadequate; no attempt has been made to extend the system of "cubicles" which has been commenced on too limited a scale at Woking. It is most desirable that the provision of "cubicles" for, at any rate, a considerable proportion of the men, should be proceeded with. Some officers do not favour the arrangement, but there can be no doubt whatever of its popularity when once established. The system is adopted throughout in the Rowton Houses and similar institutions, and in the Sailors' Homes at naval ports. The plan for the new barracks, which it was intended to erect at Norwich, provided for cubicles throughout.¹

At Aldershot immense sums have been spent on barracks during the last thirty years. It is curious to note that, among other omissions from these costly structures, is any provision for company store-rooms. Every company requires a store-room, and, in consequence, it has been found necessary to appropriate barrack-rooms for the purpose.

These are merely examples of the want of knowledge and foresight which mark the construction of even our newest barracks; scores of similar examples might be adduced. It is a lamentable reflection that one of the best, if not the best of our infantry barracks is a disused female gaol.²

Of the older barracks something has already been said. Many of them are a disgrace to the country. They are past mending, and ending is the only measure which ought to be adopted with respect to them.

This survey of the condition of our barracks might well have been more extensive and more detailed. The material for illustrating the general

¹ See p. 298.

² Woking infantry barracks.

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proposition is ample ; but space does not permit of any elaborate description of the many unsuitable structures in which our soldiers are housed throughout the length and breadth of the United Kingdom. It is sufficient to insist upon the fact, which must impress itself upon every impartial observer, that some of our barracks are very bad, that the majority are devoid of comfort or convenience, and that even the most modern structures leave much to be desired, and fall far short of the standard reached by other buildings upon which a corresponding expenditure has been incurred, and which are designed for approximately similar purposes.

THE GROWING STANDARD OF COMFORT.

And here it is necessary to add a word of caution. It has been suggested that to an impartial observer our old barracks must seem bad and our new barracks indifferent. It is possible nevertheless that, in the opinion of some soldiers, this judgment may appear too harsh and too sweeping. There are no doubt officers who will maintain that not only has there been great progress, but that the new barracks are positively, as well as relatively good. That such an opinion should be entertained is natural. Officers who have been long in the Service, and who in their early years were acquainted with the almost unspeakable discomforts and indecencies of barrack life as it was within their own memory, are impressed with the magnitude of the change which has taken place, and by the undoubted improvement in the amenities of a soldier's life. They realise how much progress has been made ; but it is, perhaps, permissible to add that they do not realise with equal clearness how much greater is the progress which has been made outside the Army.

The standards of civil life are those by which

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the general public are guided, and the recruit, who comes from and returns to the civil population, will, in the long run, expect the same scale of comfort and convenience as that which is enjoyed by the class from which he is drawn. There is still a class to which the comforts and conveniences of barrack life are a great advance on those to which they have been accustomed. But there is also a class, growing in numbers every year, of which this cannot be said, and those who belong to it are undoubtedly deterred from joining the Army, because by so doing they would be compelled to live under uncongenial conditions.¹

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XXVI.

1. The barrack accommodation of the Army is not satisfactory.

2. The old barracks are in many cases antiquated and unsuitable.

3. The new barracks in many cases retain the defects of the old ones.

4. The improvement in our barracks, though considerable, has not kept pace with the improvement in the general standard of comfort in the country.

5. The character of the barracks affects the opinion of those classes which ought to furnish recruits for the Army.

¹ It would be unjust to deal with this important question without bearing ample testimony to the work done by the officers in improving the barrack-rooms, providing and organising sports and recreations for the men, and adding in a hundred ways to the amenities of the soldier's life. Much more is left to the generosity and initiative of the officers than is desirable or ought to be necessary.

CHAPTER XXVII

BARRACKS AND BARRACK POLICY: PART II

THE DEPENDENCE OF BARRACK POLICY UPON ARMY POLICY.

It is one of the pleasing maxims of British jurisprudence that there is no wrong without a remedy. It is only a counsel of despair that permits of our approaching Army problems in any other spirit. If the condition of our barracks be as unsatisfactory as has been suggested, the task of improving them is incumbent upon the Army Council. It has already been pointed out that much has been done, that even in the design and construction of the barracks themselves there has been some progress, and that many of the objectionable features of barrack life have been got rid of, or greatly modified. But much more remains to be done.

What is the nature of the remedy which ought to be applied, and what steps should be taken to apply it? These are the questions to which it is proposed to give some answer in this and the following chapter. But before any attempt is made to remedy an evil, it is well, if possible, to ascertain its cause. Radical remedies are usually the most efficient. If our barracks are bad, or at any rate less good than they ought to be, to what cause must we attribute their shortcomings? Certainly not to want of money. The sums which have been spent under various loans for the con-

ALDERNEY AND PORTSMOUTH 277

struction of barracks, and out of Estimates for their maintenance and repair, are gigantic, and would have amply sufficed to provide suitable accommodation if they had been expended upon a uniform and intelligible system. It is easy to say that there has hitherto been little system in our barrack policy; it is far more difficult to prove that in view of the frequent changes in Army policy as a whole, it would have been possible at any time to establish a uniform and consistent system. It is not necessary to blame any person or office for not achieving the impossible. The fault, if there be one, lay with those who were responsible for the general administration of the Army, and not with any subordinate department. But it must be clearly understood that if there is to be a consistent and continuous barrack policy, there must also be a consistent and continuous Army policy.

ALDERNEY AND PORTSMOUTH.

The reasons which have led to the building of our barracks are numerous, and in many instances curious. Troops are quartered in the Tower of London, and married men and their families live in the Tower ditches, because the Romans fortified Tower Hill, and because every generation which has dwelt in this country since their day has accepted the *fait accompli*. Untenanted barracks for thousands of men exist at Alderney because half a century ago a French invasion was apprehended, and the building of many forts, many barracks, and a breakwater within a few miles of Cherbourg were considered useful precautions against the occurrence of such a calamity. The breakwater, which was built on a faulty plan, fell down, and has for the most part gone to ruin; the barracks are empty; there are no guns in the forts. But the construction of the barracks was an

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outcome of a general Army policy. The policy has changed, and the requirements it created no longer exist. The same policy which created forts and barracks in Alderney, created many more forts and barracks in the ring of fortifications which surround Portsmouth from Fort Purbrook to Gillkicker Fort. The same change of policy has made them useless. Barracks exist and troops are quartered in several of our large towns because, in the first half of the nineteenth century, a discontented and unruly population had a habit of rioting, breaking machinery, and otherwise disturbing the peace. The inhabitants of Leeds—a city which furnishes an example of barracks owing their situation to such a reason—no longer riot or break machinery. The existing barracks are as out of place as they are inconvenient and undesirable from the military point of view. Many more examples might be adduced in support of the thesis that barrack-building is the outcome of Army policy, and that as that policy changes, so must the barrack policy change in accordance with it.

It is idle to pretend that all these changes, undesirable as they are, are avoidable. The practice of war is ever changing; new developments in arms and armaments, new alliances, national extension, the growth or decline of the Navy, all act and re-act upon the composition, distribution, and duties of the Army. No man, no administration, is wise enough to forecast for any length of time the demands of the future; and to use hard words of the War Office because it acts in accordance with a universal law is to be in the fashion, but is not for that reason either just or sensible.

DUBLIN AND LONDON.

At the same time there can be no doubt that, though some changes are unavoidable, there is

room for improved method and the display of a more business-like spirit in our barrack policy. It can hardly be pretended that the retention of many inconvenient, and in many cases, insanitary buildings in the heart of our great towns is unavoidable. The barracks in Dublin were for many years a scandal, and little that is good can be said of some of those which are still in use. In many large towns valuable sites are occupied by buildings which are ill-adapted to their purpose, and which in some instances are so ill-adapted that they can no longer be utilised for their original purpose.

In London itself, the State possesses a most valuable property, part of which is occupied by exceedingly bad barracks and might with great advantage and profit be transferred to other national purposes. But the absence of a general policy, and the fact that the public lands in the metropolis are controlled by at least four different bodies, each possessing an organisation and a legal staff of its own, have hitherto prevented any utilisation of the whole estate for the benefit of the owners as a whole.¹

Some indications will be given in the next chapter of the direction in which a barrack policy might tend under existing conditions. Now, as at any other time, such a policy must be conditional upon army policy as a whole; but if a new policy is to be adopted for the Army generally, it is all the more important that a consistent and appropriate barrack policy should form part of it.

BARRACK POLICY AND RECRUITING.

We have hitherto spoken of the uncertainty of our barrack policy viewed from the military standpoint. It must further be considered from the

¹ The Army Council, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the Board of Works, the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, and the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital.

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point of view of the comfort and convenience of the officers and men who inhabit the barracks. A barrack, in order to fulfil its proper purpose, ought in the first place to be situated in the place most suitable upon military grounds ; but, if this can be achieved consistently with the primary condition, it should also be in a spot which makes life for the soldiers who inhabit it congenial and attractive. Further, it should be built and equipped in such a manner as to provide a standard of comfort and convenience at least equal to that which is demanded by the class from which the soldier is drawn. And here it must be remembered that one of the commonest errors which occur in the discussion of Army matters is the belief that as the soldier is, so he must always be. Even the best officers not infrequently fall into this mistake. The soldier as they know him, and have long known him, comes, as a rule, from a class whose idea of refinement and comfort is elementary, and whose surroundings are often squalid in the extreme. It is no use, we are told, giving greater advantages, increasing the scale of comfort—the same men will always come forward, and no others ; you will have the same class to-morrow as you had yesterday. There cannot be a greater mistake than to suppose that the law which applies to every other profession and calling in life does not apply to the Army. At one time the Army offered neither good pay nor good prospects, decent accommodation, nor a civilised life. It was not to be expected that under these conditions it should attract men of ambition, or men who could hope to find in any other calling that which the Army failed to offer. The Army now offers excellent pay and good prospects to any man of good conduct and intelligence who joins it. These are great attractions, and when they have become properly known—which till now they never have been—they will

have their effect. But their effect will be greatly retarded unless and until they go hand in hand with good accommodation and pleasant surroundings. When all these advantages are combined, they will most undoubtedly bring men into the Army who now do not enter it at all, or who, at the utmost, enter special branches of it only. It is essential, therefore, that our barracks should be made suitable not merely for the class who have been accustomed to enlist, but for those whom we hope to bring to and keep with the colours, and to whom the Service does undoubtedly offer a good and well-remunerated career. In barrack construction we must be ahead of, rather than behind the average public institutions of the day. At present we are a long way behind them.

BARRACKS AND THEIR BUILDERS.

It is obvious that if we are to keep abreast, or if we are to go somewhat ahead of the average of the day, we must take full advantage of the highest skill which the country affords, and of the technical knowledge and experience which can only be acquired by long practice in the difficult work of construction. It would not be correct to say that we have hitherto acted in accordance with these precepts. The barracks of the Army have been almost exclusively built and maintained by the Royal Engineers. It is no disparagement of that very distinguished corps to say that as a rule its members do not possess, and cannot possess the great experience of constructive work which is considered necessary in the case of those who work for great corporations or other civilian employers. The education of an Engineer officer is an admirable one, but it necessarily embraces a large number of subjects, which, from the military point of view, are at least as important as barrack con-

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struction. It is probable that the corps of Royal Engineers, which has been so prolific in brilliant scientific and practical men, has produced some architects of first-rate merit, but such cases must necessarily be exceptional, and it is impossible to examine the barracks of the United Kingdom, as a whole, without being convinced that the exceptions have not been numerous.

It is remarkable how little a barrack of the present day differs in essentials from a barrack of George III.'s time. Rule and precedent have evidently controlled design to an extent which has gone far to exclude originality, and to stereotype that which was never satisfactory, and which is in no way in accordance with modern views and requirements.

The time has come when the method of barrack construction requires to be reviewed from a new standpoint. Something more than adaptation and internal readjustment is needed. The problem of how to house 1,000 officers and men should be reconsidered on its merits, and altogether apart from preconceived ideas or rules made under conditions that do not now exist. In this way only will the full advantage of modern progress be gained on behalf of the Army.

CHANGES OF QUARTERING AND BARRACK ACCOMMODATION.

In enumerating the causes which have kept the standard of comfort and convenience in our barracks somewhat low, the effect of perpetually changing the quarters of regiments and battalions must not be overlooked. It is easy to see that under existing Army organisation it is nobody's business, and indeed nobody's pleasure, to spend time, money, or zeal in improving, beautifying, or preserving our barrack structures. Let us take the case of

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a battalion quartered, say, at Belfast or Sheffield. For a period of two or three years the battalion occupies the quarters assigned to it. At the end of that time it receives orders to relieve its linked battalion—it may be at Singapore, at Cape Town, or at Malta. Officers and men march out, knowing that not one of them will, in all human probability, enter the barrack gates again. As to who may come after them they know little, and, being human, they care less. They know that according to the custom of the Service they will be charged a certain sum for barrack damages, for repairing the somewhat dismal edifice they are quitting. They take no pains whatever to leave their temporary home any better than they found it; indeed it would not be reasonable to expect that they should do so: no man will invest in property on a three years' lease. The result is that the barracks obtain no advantage whatever from the care and interest of their occupants; they tend to deteriorate steadily, instead of improving.

Moreover, another very important influence which might tend in the direction of improvement is entirely shut out. In every part of the United Kingdom local feeling is always ready to show itself on behalf of any local institution. Money and sympathy are forthcoming for the repair of cathedrals, the erection and maintenance of churches and chapels, for public monuments, for county cricket and football clubs, and for a hundred other local institutions. Who can doubt that if an opportunity were given, the same generosity would be extended to the county regiment; but at present, with all the goodwill in the world, a locality can do nothing for its soldiers.¹

¹ An excellent spirit was shown by many counties during the war; large sums were raised to supply the men in the field with necessaries and comforts, to maintain families in the absence of their wage-earners, and to assist men on their discharge. In many places also memorials have been erected to the soldiers who fell. These are

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It is idle to complain of a state of things which is the natural and inevitable result of the system we have thought fit to adopt. As a rule the last place in which the county regiment is quartered is its own county; and on the rare occasions when it is so quartered, its sojourn is brief, and when it departs no one can reasonably anticipate that it will return during the military life of those who are serving in it.

LOCAL INTEREST AND BARRACK ACCOMMODATION.

Lest it should be supposed that the view here taken of the friendly disposition of the localities has been exaggerated, or that the magic power of permanent association in improving the amenities and conveniences of the soldier's life, has been over-stated, the reader is invited to visit any of those military stations where these influences have been allowed to operate. A portion of the Royal Marine Depot at Walmer was originally the stables of a Cavalry regiment; the Walmer Depot is now by far the finest, the best equipped, the most comfortable, and the most popular Infantry depot in the United Kingdom. The Marine Artillery Barracks at Eastney furnish an object-lesson as to what may be done by continuous improvement. Every shilling that is contributed from public funds, or by the officers and the men, is spent for the benefit of the Royal Marine Artillery. It is everybody's interest to improve; it is everybody's interest to maintain the improvement; and the result is evident not only in the mess-room and the theatre, but in all the subsidiary arrangements of the depot, including the provision for married women, both on and off the strength, and for the education of children.

gratifying signs of the good feeling which prevails, but they are also indications of the difficulty of finding any method of giving effect to it, under ordinary conditions.



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The barracks for the Royal Marine Light Infantry Divisions at Chatham, Gosport, and Devonport fall but little behind those of the Royal Marine Artillery. The effect of permanency in improving the accommodation for the officers and non-commissioned officers can be seen wherever there is a large permanent mess; as, for instance, in the case of the Royal Artillery at Woolwich, the Royal Engineers at Chatham, and, to a less degree at present, in the comparatively new headquarters of the Army Service Corps at Aldershot.

Excellent as the result has been in all these cases, even more may be expected if similar opportunities are given to the Cavalry and Infantry regiments, for, in the instances cited above, the troops concerned are for the most part quartered in districts which are not the centre of any strong county feeling, and with which they have no strictly territorial connection.

It is quite obvious that as long as the whole Army is recruited for a uniform term of service, and is indiscriminately liable to be sent abroad in time of peace, no permanent territorial quartering is possible. From time to time battalions must inevitably be rooted up and dispatched to the other end of the world. Such a liability makes permanent quartering impossible. A long term of enlistment would in any event make it undesirable. To keep men for seven or ten years quartered in one town would not be good for the town or for the men. But the difficulty is not insuperable. Every one who visits Germany will find the same regiments quartered year after year in the same towns; but though the regiments are the same, the men who compose them change; and in this possibility of change is to be found the key to the problem. It is only when battalions are kept at home in time of peace, and when the men who

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compose them are enlisted for a short period, that true territorial quartering, with all its attendant advantages, will become possible.

THE SITUATION OF BARRACKS.

Lastly, there is a point connected with barrack policy which, though it does not affect the barracks themselves, does closely affect the comfort and consequently the contentment of those who live in them. As the welfare and popularity of the Army are closely bound up with the contentment of the men, the subject referred to is of great consequence and demands careful consideration. The soldier is like other men, he is willing to work hard, to endure discomfort, and even hardship when the necessity arises. Those who have seen the British soldier in the field living in holes in the ground, or sleeping in the open air, scantily supplied with the bare necessities of life, and who have observed his cheerful demeanour and his unwavering fortitude, know that he can dispense with the pleasures of life; but he would much rather enjoy them, and in this respect he is singularly like the rest of mankind.

This fact should not be forgotten by those who have to choose the quarters which the soldier is to occupy in time of peace. Military necessities must always be paramount. Isolated posts and disagreeable stations must be held, if the interests of the Service demand. But the fewer isolated and disagreeable posts it is necessary to maintain in time of peace, the better for the popularity of the Army.

And this reflection naturally leads us to inquire what is and what is not a popular station. There can be no doubt as to what the answer must be. Soldiers as an almost invariable rule prefer to be quartered in or near a town, and do not like to be

quartered in remote spots where the society and amusements they are accustomed to are lacking.

A few years ago a change in Army policy led to the erection of a number of new barracks in districts which were not only remote from any populous centre, but which were in fact selected on account of their distance from such centres. Some of the barracks so designed were completed; others, for reasons which will be referred to later, were not proceeded with. Among the former were the barracks at Tidworth on Salisbury Plain, and at Borden in Hampshire. Among the latter were projected barracks at Bulford on Salisbury Plain, and at Stobs in the south of Scotland. The policy which led to the adoption of this great scheme of building was a very intelligible one, and there was much to be advanced in favour of it. It can hardly be doubted, however, that the arguments against are far stronger than those in favour of it, and were entitled to prevail, as they ultimately have done.

Not only are barracks on Salisbury Plain and on the exposed moorland of Roxburghshire lonely at all times, and in winter exposed and depressing in the last degree, but their erection on the edge of the areas set aside for manœuvring must result in an undesirable curtailment of the too scanty space available for that purpose. There are many officers who regret the immense extension which has been given to the establishments at Aldershot. It is possible that the advantage to be gained by the concentration of an entire army corps under a single command and within a limited area, compensates for the injury which has been done to that area as a manœuvring ground. It was perhaps impossible to foresee at the outset how great the extension would be, and how entirely the district would be given up to bricks and mortar, to ranges, and to other permanent constructions which inter-

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fere with the movement of the troops. But with the example of Aldershot before us, it is most desirable that no such development should be permitted upon Salisbury Plain. It must be admitted, however, that the concentration of troops involved in the erection of large groups of barracks was approved with a definite military purpose. It was held that by concentrating divisions and brigades the task of training could be made easier and more effective than under the system of widely distributed units, and that organisation for war would be rendered more complete by the adoption of such a method. It would be unwise to ignore or make light of the reasons by which this policy was supported; but that the results were not satisfactory from the point of view of officers and men is certain, and there seems no reason to doubt that the advantages which it was hoped to obtain by concentration throughout the whole year, can be obtained with equal certainty by bringing the troops together upon the manœuvring ground for a portion of each year, and allowing them to pass the winter in more attractive and more popular quarters.

Probably the most popular and certainly the best situation for a barrack is near, but not in, a town. The disadvantages of a site in the centre of a town are obvious: land is dear, the space necessary for drill and recreation is limited, field work can only be undertaken at the end of a long march, and ranges must always be distant from headquarters; but, save in the case of very small towns, the best situation for a barrack is undoubtedly three or four miles from the populous centre, to which the men can resort for recreation and society, but in the midst of which they do not live. If this view be correct, it furnishes us with a further indication as to the lines which true barrack policy should follow. No more barracks

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should be built upon the manœuvring grounds. No more barracks should be built, save under very special circumstances,¹ in the large towns; and if possible barracks in the large towns should be got rid of and transferred to some convenient site in the environs.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XXVII.

1. Barrack policy depends upon Army policy.
2. Changes in Army policy are inevitable, and changes in barrack policy are, therefore, also inevitable. But these changes might be less frequent than they have hitherto been.
3. The barrack accommodation in London is inadequate and unsatisfactory.
4. By dealing with Government property in London as a whole, important improvements may be made in the barrack accommodation of London.
5. The improvement of barracks directly affects recruiting.
6. Barrack-designing ought to be entrusted to architects who have had ample experience in providing accommodation in accordance with modern requirements.
7. The Royal Engineers do not necessarily possess the required experience.
8. Local interest tends to improve the comfort and amenities of a barrack.
9. Local quartering is a condition precedent to the effective display of local interest.
10. The popularity of a quarter depends in large measure upon its situation.
11. The most popular situation for a barrack is in or in the neighbourhood of a town.
12. The best situation for a barrack is in the neighbourhood of a town.

¹ *e.g.* the barracks for the Guards in London and the barracks for the fortresses, such as Portsmouth and Plymouth, as long as it is considered necessary to trust the defence of these places to the Army.

CHAPTER XXVIII

BARRACKS AND BARRACK POLICY: PART III

CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM.

CRITICISM is easy, action is often difficult. It would be most unreasonable to confine our survey of barrack policy to a view of the defects of the present system, and of the unsatisfactory character of existing arrangements. The reader may justly ask for something in the way of constructive suggestion, some indication of the policy which, in the opinion of the author, may with advantage be substituted for that which has been so freely condemned. It is the aim of the present chapter to indicate the outlines of such a policy, and to suggest some alterations which ought to be made, and can be made without involving the country in undue expense.

It has been stated that the military authorities are in possession of a considerable number of valuable sites, both in the Metropolis and in the provinces, which might with advantage be sold, and the proceeds applied to the better housing of the troops. There can be little doubt that such is the case.

This is not the place to enter into any elaborate detail. The responsibility for action must always rest with the authorities for the time being, and those who are in charge of the interests of the

THE WELLINGTON BARRACKS 291

Army, at any given time, must be the sole judges of what lands and buildings can with advantage be retained or disposed of at any given moment. But that some changes are desirable and necessary can hardly be doubted.

The Metropolis alone provides ample scope for an enterprising reformer with time at his disposal, and authority at his back—for where many vested interests are concerned, authority is essential.

THE WELLINGTON BARRACKS.

A few examples will suffice to show what might be done. The Wellington Barracks and St. George's Barracks are an almost perfect example of what a modern barrack should not be. It is no exaggeration to say that they are far below the standard which is considered necessary for any modern infantry barrack, in this country or abroad. They fall lamentably and hopelessly short of what the home of the King's Guards, situated in the centre of the Metropolis of the Empire, might reasonably be expected to be. The Guards' Barracks ought to be an example and pattern to the whole Army. As a matter of fact, the Wellington Barracks are so bad, so antiquated, so ill-arranged, so unworthy in every respect, that it is impossible to allow a foreign officer to inspect them without a sense of shame.

The Wellington Barracks ought to be pulled down and erected elsewhere. This could be done provided there were reasonable co-operation among the various authorities who control the property of the State in London. There are strong reasons why the Guards should be quartered in the neighbourhood of the Palace of the Sovereign, but there is no adequate reason why they should be retained in Birdcage Walk. There can be no doubt that, if the matter were viewed as a business trans-

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action, the Wellington Barracks would be pulled down before they fell down, and that the site would be put into the hands of a strong syndicate, who, under proper restrictions, would be permitted to build first-class residences on the site. Two of the finest terraces in London would spring up, and a stately façade would overlook the Park. What would become of the Guards? They would find a new and a better home elsewhere. The nation possesses the sites on which the new barracks might be erected. The Wellington Barracks, in addition to other disadvantages, are either too large or too small. They are too big for one battalion; they are not big enough for two. The alternative of building a new two-battalion barrack or of building two separate barracks, each capable of accommodating a single battalion, is therefore open; and facilities exist for adopting either plan. It is not necessary to express an opinion as to where the new barracks can with the greatest advantage be built, but there is reason to believe that they can be constructed on public property and at a very small expense to the nation.

CHELSEA HOSPITAL.

The question of the future of Chelsea Hospital also merits careful examination.

The time has come to inquire whether the beautiful and historic building in Chelsea is applied to a wise purpose, or whether it is fulfilling that purpose in the best possible manner?

The Hospital is at present tenanted by 558 old soldiers. Many of these men are separated from their wives; and all of them are necessarily compelled to spend the last years of their lives in what must inevitably be somewhat melancholy surroundings. The idea of a Veterans' Hospital is attractive and picturesque, but the reality is by no means as satisfactory as the ideal. A dis-

tinguished officer, who was at one time concerned with the administration of the Royal Hospital, is reported to have declared that his principal duty consisted in arranging funerals. This is perhaps an exaggeration, but the remark is suggestive. As a matter of fact, the *raison d'être* of the hospital has ceased. At the time it was founded, no provision existed for the sick or infirm soldier. The lives of discharged soldiers were often miserable in the extreme. Most of the men, after a lifetime of service, had neither home nor friends to go to. The life in the Hospital was in every respect a vast improvement upon that to which the old soldier outside its walls was destined.

Matters have greatly changed at the present day. The soldier is rarely discharged over the age of forty or forty-five. If he remains in the Service after that age, he is in all probability a non-commissioned or warrant officer in receipt of a substantial pension. For ten or twenty years he is not a fit object for the benevolence of the Hospital. He has an occupation, and in most cases he has a family or friends whom he must leave behind him if he is admitted into the Institution. In nine cases out of ten, a discharged and a disabled soldier will be much happier and much better off outside the Hospital than within it, provided he has adequate means to secure him from want. It is right that he should possess those means, and there is no reason why they should not be furnished to him.

The considerations which have been referred to above were recognised, and their cogency admitted, in the case of the Greenwich pensioners. At Greenwich forty years ago, as at Chelsea at the present day, the system of "inmate pensioners" existed. It was terminated, to the immense advantage of the Navy. The building was appropriated to other naval uses; the funds were employed for the purpose of paying pensions to

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aged and infirm seamen, the "Greenwich pensions" have proved an inestimable boon to the Navy. The number of men who receive them is much larger than the number who could be admitted to the Hospital, and the conditions under which the pensioners live have been greatly improved. It is difficult to understand why a process which has proved so beneficial to the Navy should not be equally beneficial if applied to the Army. It must be remembered that much of the work of the Chelsea Commissioners is similar to that transacted by the Commissioners of Greenwich Hospital, and is concerned with the allotment of pensions and grants to old soldiers not resident in the Hospital.

The principle of the change once admitted, its application would present no serious difficulty. All vested interests would, of course, be strictly safeguarded, and provisions would be made for those pensioners now resident who have no home, and no friends to whom to go.¹

It is hard to believe that such a change as that recommended would not be welcomed by the soldiers themselves, for the funds available for pensions would be increased, and the conditions under which the pensioners enjoy the national bounty would be greatly ameliorated.

ST. GEORGE'S BARRACKS.

It has already been pointed out that the Recruiting Depot in St. George's Barracks is one of the worst military buildings in London. It is an old barrack of George III.'s time, situated in a squalid neighbourhood at the back of and

¹ The whole of this question was brought under the notice of the War Office in the year 1896 by the late Colonel Hughes, then Member of Parliament for Woolwich. He estimated that no less than four out-pensions could be provided for the cost of one in-pension. That, in other words, 600 men could receive adequate out-pensions in lieu of 150 provided for within the Hospital.

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adjoining the National Gallery. Not many years ago its condition was disgraceful ; but of late something has been done to make the rooms decent, and the accommodation tolerable. But, even now, the building is most unsatisfactory, and quite unfitted for the purpose it has to serve. The establishment which receives a larger number of recruits than any other depot in the United Kingdom, ought not to be hidden away in a slum, nor ought it to be structurally inadequate and melancholy, and even disreputable in appearance.

If a common policy be ever adopted in respect of government buildings and government land in London, this depot and the barrack attached to it will be vacated, and the recruits will be received in a new and specially designed depot, which might with advantage be erected on the site of Old Scotland Yard.¹

Incidentally, the change will be a gain to the nation, for it will remove a serious danger from fire to which the National Gallery is always exposed so long as the St. George's Barracks are maintained. The new depot should not only be on a main street, but it should be a handsome and attractive building which a recruit can enter with his head high, and with the feeling that he is making an honourable entry into an honoured profession.

It is true that some recruiting officers attach a peculiar importance to the retention of the depot in its present position, and believe that, were it to be removed from its present squalid surroundings, many recruits would be lost to the Army. There are some also who believe that it is desirable that a recruiting depot, like a pawnshop, should have an entrance into which applicants may creep with-

¹ The site of St. George's Barracks is all government property, but only a small portion in the middle of it belongs to the War Department. Hence no transfer can take place without agreement between the two Departments concerned ; the result, as usual, is a deadlock, there being no superior authority to give a positive order.

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out being exposed to the gaze of the curious. The mistake—for it is a mistake—is the outcome of the old and discredited theory that what the Army has been it must always be, and that a man who takes service must necessarily be always more or less ashamed of the fact.

THE DUKE OF YORK'S SCHOOL AND OTHER SITES.

The site of the Duke of York's School might with great advantage be used for Army purposes. The school is a military institution under the control of the War Office; the site belongs to the Chelsea Commissioners. There is no one who has authority to decide to what public purpose this public property can with the greatest advantage be devoted.

The building in Rochester Row, for many years used as a Guards' Hospital, is owned by the Trustees of H.R.H. the late Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, who himself held it as trustee for the Grenadier Guards. The War Office leases the building at a pepper-corn rent.¹

This is a case in which the two interests clearly ought to be amalgamated, the site sold, and the proceeds applied to the erection of buildings elsewhere. The Rochester Row site, though valuable, is quite unsuitable for military purposes.

A NEW DESIGN FOR BARRACKS.

It has been suggested in the preceding chapter that, among other desirable alterations in our system of barrack construction, a change in the actual design of the barracks should be included, and it has been indicated that one of the most obvious

¹ The Guards originally provided their own hospital accommodation. When the War Office undertook the charge of the sick, the arrangement above referred to was made.

and effective means by which the desired improvement can be obtained, is to entrust the designing of barracks to persons who have made a life-long study of the problem of housing large numbers of men, with due consideration to comfort on the one hand and economy on the other. There is undoubtedly room for improvement, and the fact has already been recognised by the Army Council. In 1904 a new department of "Barrack Construction" was formed at the War Office, and at the head of it was placed a gentleman who, from his previous experience, seemed peculiarly well fitted for the task of designing cheap but comfortable buildings, conforming to the latest requirements with regard to space, convenience, and internal arrangement.

The new Director of Barrack Construction had already dealt with a problem analogous to that with which he was confronted on entering the War Office. He had designed and supervised the construction of some of the great blocks of buildings known as the "Rowton Houses," erected for the accommodation of working men in London and Birmingham. These buildings have necessarily been constructed in conformity with local regulations and with a strict regard to economy. At the same time, nothing has been omitted which could make them attractive and convenient to the class for whom they are intended. They have realised the expectations formed of them, and have proved thoroughly well suited to their purpose.

An opportunity was soon afforded to the Director of Barrack Construction to apply his experience to the task of designing suitable and economical buildings for soldiers. A fortunate conjunction of circumstances made it possible to call for a new design. The Cavalry barracks at Norwich were more than a hundred years old; they had become so insanitary, and indeed pestilential, that men and horses had to be removed from them while some

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of the most flagrant defects were being remedied. But no patching could bring the dilapidated buildings up to the modern standard of decency and comfort, and it was decided to pull down the barracks, and to erect new buildings upon another and more convenient site.

The military authorities were of opinion that the barracks should be erected at Norwich, which was not only a popular station for Cavalry, but possessed the advantage of a fine exercising-ground, the acquisition of which had been facilitated by the inhabitants of the city.

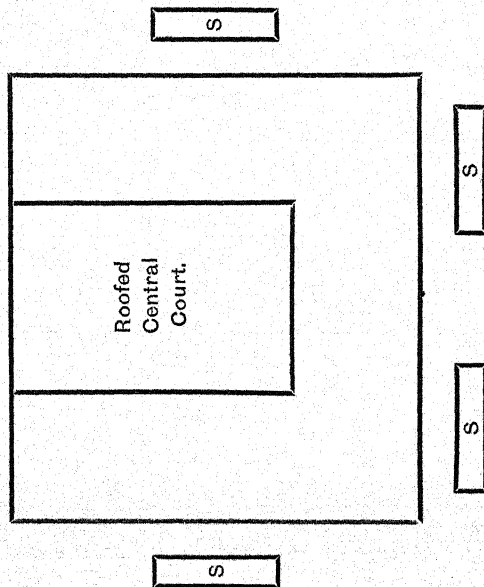
Anxious to assist the War Office and to retain the regiment, of which they were proud, the citizens furnished a further evidence of their goodwill by placing at the disposal of the War Office, as a gift, a well-selected freehold site valued at £5,000. The gift was accepted, the plans were prepared, money was available, and in October, 1905, the foundation-stone of the barracks was laid by the Secretary of State, representatives of every branch of the land forces of the Crown raised in the county being present at the ceremony.

Departing in this matter from a desirable tradition of continuity, the decision to build the barracks was promptly reversed by the Army Council in the spring of 1906, and the site was left derelict. The plans, however, remain, and some reference to them is necessary. They were prepared by the Director of Barrack Construction, under the instructions of the Under-Secretary of State, after long consultation with a committee of officers, including specially selected representatives of the Cavalry. The design actually adopted differs materially from any which has hitherto been approved for military barracks. The usual practice in barrack construction in the United Kingdom has been to cover a large area with a number of disconnected buildings two, or, at most, three storeys high. It has appar-

ently been held, for some reason not easy to understand, that two-storied buildings are to be preferred on sanitary grounds. There appears to be no foundation for this belief, and in the new plans it was disregarded. In many of the existing Cavalry stables the men are quartered over the horses, and the ventilation of the stables themselves leaves much to be desired. A different system was adopted in the new plan. The general arrangement of the main building may be learnt from the accompanying plan. The building forms three sides of a square, and is five storeys high. On the ground floor the space enclosed by the three sides of the building is roofed in, and on this floor the whole life of the soldier during daylight is lived. Here are his messing-rooms, reading-rooms, recreation-rooms; rooms for the non-commissioned officers, bath-rooms, and latrines. In existing barracks all these essentials are scattered throughout a variety of detached buildings. The first floor of the new barrack provides accommodation for one Squadron of the regiment. It is divided into four parts for as many Troops; each Troop quarter communicates directly with the ground by a separate stair, but the inspecting officer can pass round the entire floor without descending. The second and third floors furnish similar accommodation for one Squadron each; while the top, or fourth floor, which is fireproof, serves as a mobilisation store for the regiment. The stables are in three groups, each facing one side of the main building, so that the men descending from their barrack-rooms, or issuing from the ground-floor, can proceed at once to their horses. The officers and non-commissioned officers' quarters and the married quarters occupy suitable detached buildings. Much care has been bestowed upon these important adjuncts of the barracks, and a new and valuable feature has been introduced into the design of the officers' quarters.

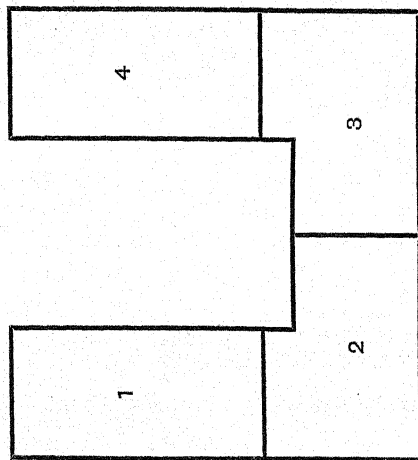
PLAN OF PROPOSED NEW BARRACKS.

A



A—Ground Plan, showing Roofed-in Court.

B



B—Plan of First, Second, and Third Floors, showing Four Troop Quarters.

S—Stables.

Each single quarter is composed of two rooms instead of one as at present. The gain in comfort and convenience to the officer due to his having a separate sleeping- and living-room is considerable.

That barracks constructed on the approved plan of 1905 must be much more convenient and comfortable than any which have hitherto been erected, admits of no doubt. It seems equally certain that, while the cost can under no circumstances exceed, it will in all probability be considerably less than that of barracks constructed in accordance with the old plan of covering a large area with a multitude of two-storied buildings, each, perforce, requiring a separate foundation and a separate roof.

It is greatly to be hoped that, if the decision to remove the Cavalry from Norwich be adhered to, barracks upon the new plan will be erected elsewhere. Nothing can more effectively assist recruiting than the substitution of healthy and attractive buildings for the sombre, inconvenient, and often insanitary barracks in which our troops are too frequently lodged.

SOLDIERS LIVING OUT OF BARRACKS.

Enough has been said with regard to individual buildings, their qualities and their defects. It is only necessary to add, in conclusion, that it is of immense importance to the Army that the question of barrack construction should be very carefully dealt with. In time it may be possible to reduce the number of barracks. There are many persons who believe that soldiers might with advantage be permitted to live out of barracks, and that were such permission given, not only might a considerable economy be effected, but that the soldiers themselves would welcome the freedom and comfort which, it is supposed, would result from the change.

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There is no reason why the experiment should not be tried, provided the suggested indulgence be confined to old soldiers. Whether the permission to lodge out would really be much appreciated is by no means certain ; that the granting of it would effect a substantial economy is more than doubtful, for it is evident that, whether fully occupied or not, the barracks must be capable of containing the whole battalion. The circumstances of no two battalions are alike, and the accommodation which was sufficient for one might be quite inadequate to the needs of another. Moreover, lodging allowance in lieu of barrack accommodation must be paid, and this must involve extra cost which may, or may not, be recouped. Questions of discipline have also to be considered ; it is not a good thing for the old and the young soldiers of a battalion to be segregated.

THE TRUE WAY TO GET GOOD BARRACKS.

But the true way to get good barracks is to build them in the first instance in accordance with a modern design, and, having built them, to interest the neighbourhood and the regiment in their maintenance and adornment.

It has been said that the popularity of barracks greatly depends upon their situation, and that, generally speaking, a barrack should be placed outside, but in the neighbourhood of a large town. It was in this belief that the Secretary of State in 1903 ordered the discontinuance of the scheme of building which was then being carried out on Salisbury Plain, and which was to be extended to the manœuvre-ground at Stobs. A block of eight barracks had been actually begun at Tidworth ; this block it was necessary to finish, but the completion of the programme at Bulford and Stobs, which would have involved the expenditure of

WHAT THE SOLDIER WANTS 303

£1,500,000, was countermanded. There can be no doubt that this step was in the interest of the troops who, while ready enough to rough it under canvas and to go on short-commons during manœuvres, do not like to spend the long winter months in places where social life and amusement are not to be found. To the soldier, as to other men at his time of life, the pleasures of "Wein, Weib, und Gesang" appeal very strongly.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XXVIII.

1. Many sites at present occupied by barracks might with advantage be sold, and the barracks rebuilt elsewhere.

2. The Wellington Barracks in London ought to be removed from their present site.

3. Chelsea Hospital should be dealt with on the same lines as Greenwich Hospital.

4. The abandonment of Chelsea as a hospital for invalids would be humane to old soldiers, and would enlarge the available pension fund.

5. St. George's Barracks in London are a danger and a disgrace, and should be destroyed.

6. A new Central Recruiting Depot should be built.

7. A new design of barracks should be adopted.

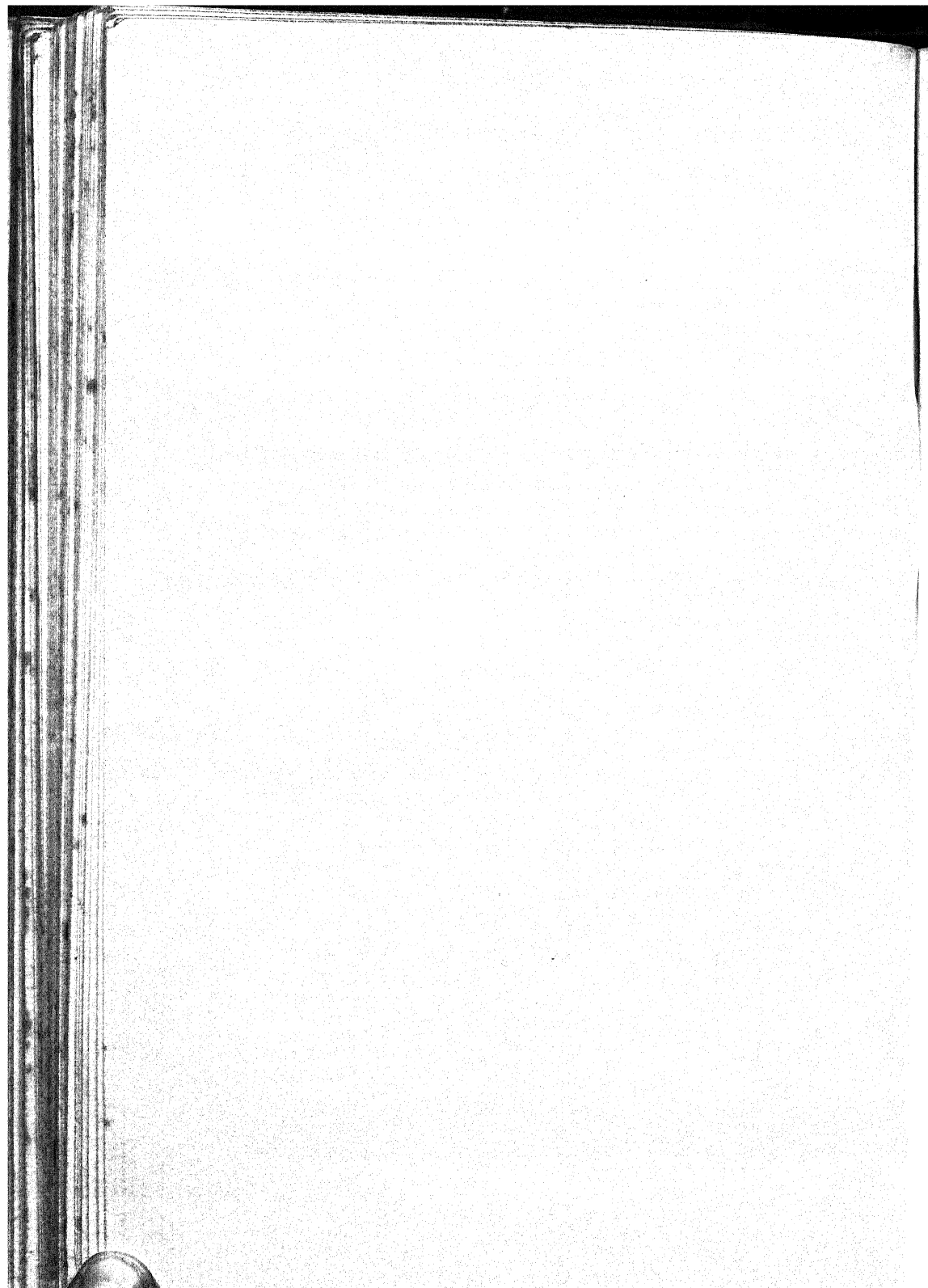
8. The design approved for the Cavalry barracks at Norwich is a great improvement upon any which has hitherto been adopted.

9. The question of barrack construction is one of great importance to the welfare of the Army.

10. It is an open question whether the permission to live out of barracks can be accorded with advantage. An experiment under proper safeguards should be made.

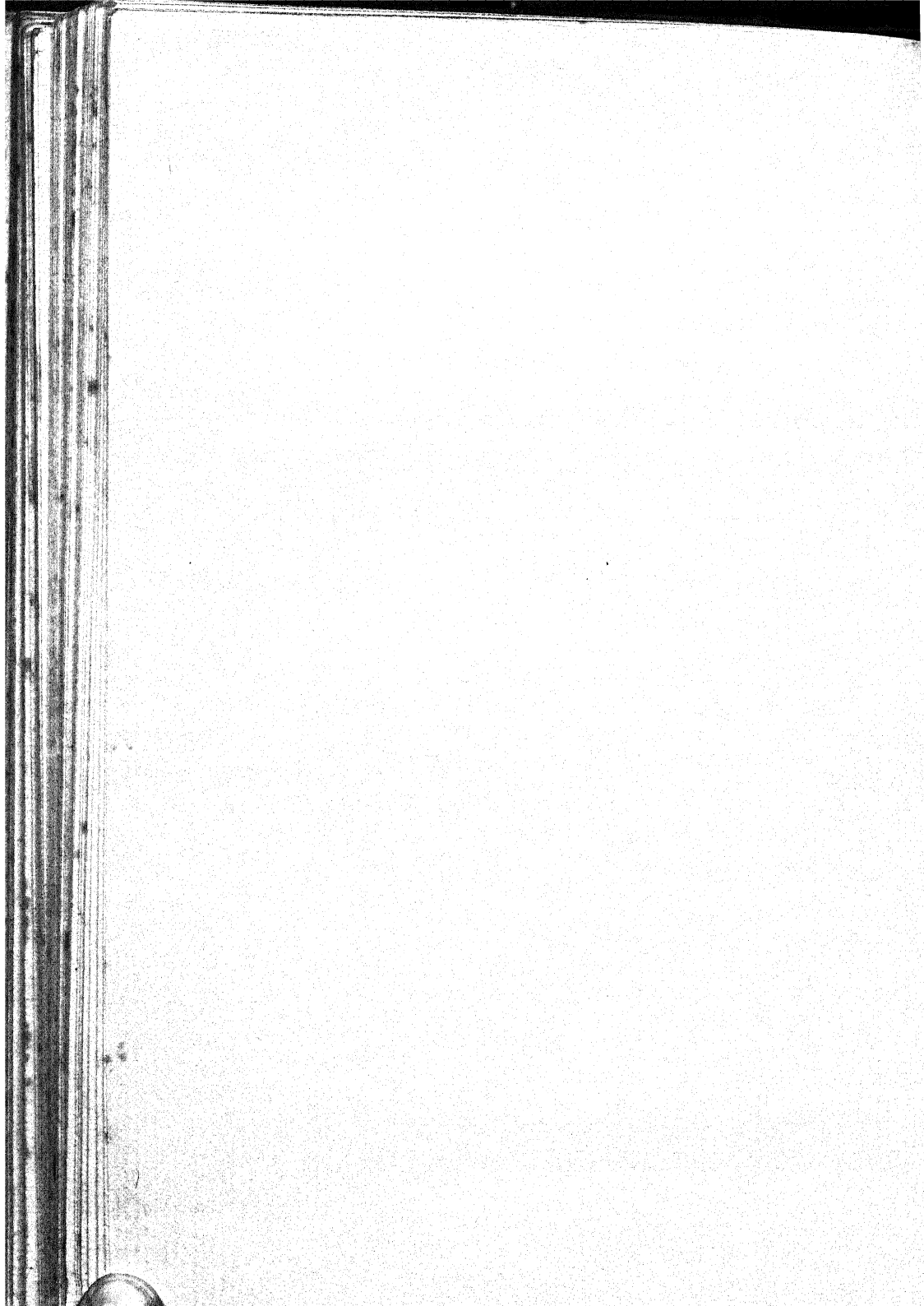
11. The best way to get good barracks is to select a proper design, and to interest the regiment and the locality in the upkeep of the building.

12. The action of the War Office in arresting barrack expenditure on Salisbury Plain in 1903 was right.



PART II

AN EXAMINATION OF SOME GENERAL PROBLEMS AFFECTING THE ARMY



CHAPTER XXIX

THE QUESTION OF NUMBERS

THE "MILLION MEN" BASIS.

"PROVIDENCE is on the side of the big battalions" is a trite saying, which is more often true than false. In all warfare—in modern warfare perhaps more than in days gone by—numbers are essential to success. With numbers success is by no means certain; without them it can rarely be complete. The actual preponderance of numbers in the field of battle, important as it is, is less essential than the existence of an adequate number of trained officers and men to fill up the gaps made by the waste of war.

Lord Roberts, who has added to the long list of his services to the State by his earnest insistence upon the nation's dangerous want of preparation for war, has put in the forefront of his propaganda an appeal for numbers.

He asks in categorical terms for *a million men* for the defence of the Empire. Such a demand made by so high an authority requires careful and respectful attention. It must be noted that Lord Roberts' demand is not for a Regular Army of a million men, or even for an army of any kind approaching such a figure. He has made it quite clear that all he asks is that such a proportion of the youth of this country shall receive an elementary training in the use of arms, that there shall at all times be in the

country at least a million of men so trained to whom an appeal may be made for their services in time of war. It is not suggested that those who receive the training should be under any compulsion to take the field in the event of hostilities either at home or abroad ; but the Field-Marshal is of opinion that, given so large a number of partially trained men, a sufficient contingent would always respond to an appeal, if their services were required either abroad or at home.

Whether this be too sanguine a view, or whether compulsory training coupled with voluntary service be a sound and economical system, are matters of opinion about which controversy might easily arise.

Lord Roberts' views, however, are not referred to here in any critical spirit, or as the subject-matter of controversy. Reference has been made to what has been called the "One Million Men Standard," because it furnishes a convenient introduction to an inquiry which deserves much more attention than it has hitherto received.

Is it a fact that the principal defect in our fighting strength is a deficiency of numbers? The popular answer is "Yes." The true answer is emphatically "No." Lord Roberts asks for a million men who have some training in the use of arms. He is evidently under the impression that in making this demand he is holding up an ideal the attainment of which is far distant, and which can only be reached by strenuous and unprecedented effort.

General Sir Ian Hamilton seems to share his belief. In his *Staff Officer's Scrap Book*¹ he describes the defence of a fort by a Japanese party of whom a large proportion, though civilians, were nevertheless acquainted with the use of the rifle, and he continues as follows :—

"It would be difficult to find a stronger argument in favour of some kind of universal training.

¹ (Edward Arnold, 1905.)

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... Out of 75 Japanese men of all trades, 30 could handle a rifle. It would be interesting to know what proportion of Britishers out of a similar mixed crowd would know the difference between the butt and muzzle of a rifle. On a rough calculation I should say ONE IN FIVE."

THE NUMBERS WE HAVE GOT.

It is remarkable that two officers of such great distinction as Lord Roberts and Sir Ian Hamilton should apparently have fallen into a common error. That they are mistaken, the following figures suffice to show :—

NUMBER OF MEN TRAINED TO THE USE OF ARMS, AND PAID OUT OF THE PUBLIC FUNDS IN PEACE TIME :

| | |
|--|---------|
| 1. Regular Army (including British troops in India, and Colonial and native troops on the British Establishment) | 274,885 |
| 2. Army Reserve (July, 1906) | 120,000 |
| 3. Militia | 92,672 |
| 4. Militia (Reserve Division) | 7,657 |
| 5. Militia (Channel Islands, Malta and Bermuda) | 5,744 |
| 6. Imperial Yeomanry | 25,159 |
| 7. Honourable Artillery Company | 529 |
| 8. Volunteers (including Staff) | 252,360 |
| 9. Volunteers (Bermuda) | 171 |
| Total | 779,177 |
| Deduct Colonial and Native Troops | 12,000 |
| Total of Land Forces (British) | 767,177 |
| Royal Navy, including Royal Marines | 129,000 |
| Royal Naval Reserve, Fleet Reserve, and R.N. Volunteers | 52,550 |
| Grand Total | 948,727 |

In theory all these men are available for the defence of the Empire, and all of them have been instructed in the use of arms at the public cost.

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But this enumeration by no means exhausts the number of men who are paid for in peace time on the understanding that they will take part in the defence of the Empire in time of war. Other large categories have to be added, viz. :

| | |
|---|----------------|
| 1. The Indian Army, Reserves, and Volunteers | 205,000 |
| 2. The Colonial and Native Troops on the British Establishment | 12,000 |
| 3. Naval and Military Forces of the Self-governing Colonies, ¹ about | 115,000 |
| Total | <u>332,000</u> |

This large number of men should be added to that of the purely British contingent as given above. A grand total of 1,280,000 will be the result. Clearly if the British Empire be in danger, it is not for lack of men trained to the use of arms; but for lack of many other things of at least equal importance.

Nor, indeed, does the vast total given above exhaust the rich supply which, in theory at any rate, is available. Sir Ian Hamilton laments over the small number of men in this country who have been trained to the use of firearms, men who, as he puts it, "do not know the difference between the butt and muzzle of a rifle." But is there any need for taking this melancholy view?

THE NUMBERS WE MIGHT HAVE.

Very brief consideration will suffice to show that Sir Ian Hamilton's view is unduly pessimistic. It is probably well within the mark to say that for every man now serving in the various branches of our forces, there are at least three men who have passed into the ranks of the civil population, and every one of these has learnt the use of arms.

¹ To this total should, perhaps, be added the Imperial Service Troops in India, which now number over 16,000 men.

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But four times 948,000 is 3,792,000, a very large number indeed. And even to this total it is necessary to add considerably before we have completed the enumeration of all those who have been trained to the use of firearms. Every sportsman who has never served in any branch of the Navy or Army, the whole of the Royal Irish Constabulary, past and present, an immense number of boys serving in cadet corps or boys' brigades, and all members of rifle clubs who do not come within any of the classes already enumerated, have been instructed in the use of arms. The aggregate of all these classes is large, but cannot be exactly ascertained. If, however, we content ourselves with the definite figure given above, we are confronted by the fact that there must be in this country at least 3,792,000 persons who have received the elements of a military training at the expense of the State.

It need hardly be pointed out that these facts and figures have not been cited with the object of proving that the nation has got what it needs, and that the existence of this large partially trained mob furnishes us with an adequate security against attack. It has indeed been cited for the very opposite purpose, namely, that of demonstrating that what the nation really requires is not a vast addition to the number of partially trained men on whom it has no call in time of war, but rather a more perfect training, a more scientific organisation of the forces it already maintains.

Who can doubt that if two-thirds of the men nominally available¹ were fit to be used in time of war, if at the outset we could rely upon a force of 564,000 officers and men properly trained, properly equipped, well organised, and well led, we could afford to trust for such reinforcements as might become necessary during the continuance of the war to the recruits raised after the com-

¹ Not including the Navy.

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mencement of hostilities, who would be capable of easy assimilation in the cadres which would be ready to receive them?

In a word, the country is in danger, not because the number of men whom it pays is inadequate, but because it pays for numbers of men who are not, under present conditions, qualified to render effective service in time of war.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XXIX.

1. The possession of superior numbers is of great importance to an army in time of war.
2. A demand has been made for a million partially trained men for use in time of war.
3. We already have that number, and a great many more.
4. The real need of the country is not for more men, but for more available and effective men.

CHAPTER XXX

NUMBERS v. QUALITY—BRITISH AND FOREIGN METHODS COMPARED

THE DANGER OF PREFERRING QUANTITY TO QUALITY.

THE previous chapter has been devoted to the consideration of the question of "Numbers." It has been admitted that numbers are required to obtain a decisive success in modern warfare. It has been demonstrated that as far as the mere counting of heads goes, the number of individuals maintained for the military services of the Empire is very large, amounting indeed to no less than 1,280,000, of whom 923,000 are raised in the United Kingdom.

It has been shown that in addition to this enormous host we can count by millions those who, having learnt something of the military art while serving in some branch of the sea or land forces of the Crown, have re-entered civil life.

It seems evident, therefore, that if there be a defect in our arrangements, it is not due to a deficiency in numbers. If this be the case, and if it be true that while the numbers are adequate or even excessive, the military situation, nevertheless, remains unsatisfactory, it is evident that there must be a deficiency of some other kind. *Quantity* and *quality* are essential to the success of an army; the statement amounts to a truism, but the truism is nevertheless too often forgotten. Can it be that

it is because the quality of our vast force is unsatisfactory that so much uneasiness is felt? This is a point which deserves very grave consideration, the more so because there is at the present time a great and growing tendency to regard quantity as a substitute for quality. "Providence is on the side of the big battalions" is a statement which in its original application was true, but which, having become a mere catchword, is now as misleading as most catchwords are.

That, other things being equal, numbers will tell, is a proposition so obvious that we are dispensed from examining it. But does the history of war confirm the further proposition that where other things are not equal, where quality is on the one side and quantity on the other, numbers are a guarantee of success? The whole history of war gives the lie to such a proposition. And if a force possessing numbers without quality is not certain to triumph over a smaller force of superior troops, what are we to think of the contention that, numbers being equal, the force of inferior quality will overcome that of superior quality? And yet there seems grave danger of this strange doctrine gaining acceptance in this country, and being made the basis of our whole military organisation.

At the present moment there is a great and apparently growing school in this country which is entirely given over to the worship of numbers, and which appears to have no respect whatever for quality.

To this school belong all those who think that we can with advantage increase the number of our Auxiliary Forces at the expense of our small Regular Army.

THE ONLY DUTY OF AN ARMY.

But here it will doubtless be objected that such a statement as that which has just been made is an

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unjust and unfair representation of the facts of the case, and practically begs the whole question.

It will be said that those who favour the increase of the Auxiliary Forces at the expense of the Regular Army are perfectly aware of the importance of quality, but are convinced that, for the purposes of war, the Auxiliary Forces will prove as effective as the Regular soldiers whom they displace or supersede.

If such a contention be put forward—and it must be put forward if the view referred to is to be justified—its acceptance involves most important results.

The conclusion, indeed, is of such immense importance that, before it can be accepted with all its far-reaching consequences, it deserves very careful and thorough examination.

Once more let it be remembered that an army has only one essential function to perform, namely, "*To fight and win.*" To fight and be beaten is easy, but it is not profitable, and every shilling that is spent on an army which fights and is beaten is money wasted.

BRITISH AND FOREIGN VIEWS COMPARED.

Admitting this to be the case, we are brought face to face with this curious fact :

There are at present a number of great Military Powers in the world. These countries, with but a single exception, hold practically identical views as to the methods by which an army must be prepared in order to give it a reasonable chance of being victorious in war. Our own country forms the one exception, and the view entertained by the people of these Islands differs sharply and fundamentally from that entertained by all the other Military Powers.

How sharp and how fundamental this difference is can be demonstrated in a few sentences.

THE FOREIGN VIEW OF WHAT AN ARMY SHOULD BE.

In the opinion of every Military Power except Great Britain, the following qualifications are necessary for the soldier: He must be enlisted at the age of twenty, and on enlistment must go through a vigorous and continuous training under strict discipline for two or more years. At the end of his colour service he must enter a reserve, in which he is liable to be called up at regular intervals for systematic training and exercises. In order that he may learn his business, he is given the opportunity of taking part in tactical exercises on a large scale; and he is frequently employed in manoeuvres, in which he learns such important parts of the soldier's trade as marching, entrenching, bivouacking, etc.

The soldier enlisted at twenty years of age, and trained in the manner described, is drawn indiscriminately from the manhood of a great nation.

In order that the soldier may learn the details of his profession, may be accustomed to discipline, and, above all, may withstand the tendency to disintegration and demoralisation so likely to be felt under the conditions of a modern battle, highly trained non-commissioned officers are regarded as an absolutely necessary part of every regiment. Nor is it considered that the most inexperienced troops require the most inexperienced non-commissioned officers.

The history of all war, and of modern war in particular, teaches us that the quality of the officers is even more important than the quality of the men; and it is true also, as in the case of the non-commissioned officers, that the experience of the officer ought to vary in an inverse proportion to that of the troops he has to lead. Believing this to be the case, the foreign Powers alluded to consider no effort too great to ensure the high professional qualification of all their officers. A lifetime is

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considered insufficient to qualify for the higher ranks. It is true that the demand is in excess of the supply, and the fact is a source of great embarrassment to more than one foreign War Office. But the ideal is never lost sight of, and, as a consequence, the purely amateur officer does not exist, for his existence, though innocuous in peace, is a danger in war.¹

But in the foreign countries referred to it is considered by no means sufficient to train young men for two years under skilled officers and a highly organised staff. It is believed that in order to transform even the best-trained soldiers into an army much more is needed.

It is believed in those countries that an army must be composed in certain proportions of certain arms; that these arms must be taught to work together; and that in order to enable them to do so, a multitude of auxiliary and subsidiary services must be created and perfected.

Not only are these ideas entertained, but they are carried into effect.²

Lastly, in all the foreign armies whose procedure we have been considering, definite calculations exist as to the exact strength which every cadre will reach on mobilisation, and as to the number of troops of all arms which will be available at a given time and in a given place.

The belief is entertained that for military pur-

¹ There are, of course, men whose whole life has specially fitted them to take command in the field, but who, not having served an apprenticeship, may be described as amateurs. But the number of such men, even in this country, is very limited, and the best of them have a great deal to learn. The practice of war is a profession, like any other; and though there are exceptions to every rule, the number of those who are able to take their place in the front rank without going through the drudgery of learning their business is very small in all ages.

² This last remark is necessary in order to differentiate the foreign practice from our own. In this country a great number of services exist on paper because their absolute necessity is recognised. They do not exist in fact, because there is no money available, or because the money is spent upon some more showy and more popular object.

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poses, the knowledge that you can rely on having ten men as a certainty is of more value than the chance of your having twenty. In the German Army the necessity for taking a plebiscite of the 10th Army Corps to ascertain how many men cared to come forward when the order was given to cross the frontier would be regarded as prejudicing the chance of victory, which, be it once more remembered, is the one thing required.

All these things are planned, done, and endured by other Military Powers in the belief that they are indispensable to success in war.

THE BRITISH VIEW OF WHAT AN ARMY SHOULD BE.

The practice of this country differs in almost every particular from that of the other Military Powers, and it appears probable that before long the country will be invited to depart still further from that practice.

What is the belief entertained in this country?—for it must be assumed that in such a grave matter as the safety of the Empire we are acting on considered beliefs and not on haphazard. What do we think is necessary to enable our troops to fight and win?

In almost every particular our views are peculiar to ourselves. It will be useful to enumerate them for the purpose of comparison with those given above.

We do not consider it necessary that soldiers should have attained the age of twenty years on enlistment. On the contrary, we enlist every year tens of thousands of recruits who are under that age.¹ Nor do we consider that two years' training,

¹ In the Regular Army we pretend that the recruits are eighteen; in the other branches we do not even make that pretence, and thousands of children enter the ranks at the age of sixteen or seventeen, are paid for by the State, and are discharged again into the civil population before they are nineteen years old.

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or anything like it, is necessary to fit a man for the trade of a soldier.

The country is now paying for tens of thousands of soldiers whose entire training during the whole of their lives does not exceed, and indeed often does not reach, fourteen working days.

The training of the average militiaman is under twenty weeks in a service of four years. Even the reservists of the Regular Army in many cases have not passed more than two years with the colours, and this brief period is followed by ten years, during which time they take part in no exercises, and receive no practical instruction.

While this very short training is considered adequate for the rank and file, no regular system for the training of the non-commissioned officers is insisted upon. This is somewhat remarkable in view of the well-known fact that the less troops are trained, the more necessary it is that their defects should be supplemented by great efficiency in the non-commissioned officers.

THE TRAINING OF OFFICERS AND NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS OF THE AUXILIARY FORCES.

It is not intended to suggest that the non-commissioned officers of the Militia and Volunteers are not in very many instances excellent soldiers. In the Volunteers especially, there are many men of high intelligence and great zeal. In some cases pains are taken to give special training to the sergeants and corporals, and wherever this is done, the time and effort expended are amply repaid. The fact remains, however, that no regular system of instruction for non-commissioned officers of the Auxiliary Forces has yet been approved.

What is true with regard to the non-commissioned officers is true in an even more marked degree of the commissioned officers.

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It is a matter of common agreement that the want of officers, and still more the want of good officers, is the greatest weakness both of the Militia and the Volunteers.

It is always dangerous to advance a general proposition of this kind, even though its truth is indisputable.

There will always be those who will hasten to represent such an expression as an evidence of ill-will and want of sympathy. There is of course no ground whatever for such a suggestion in the present case. The officers both of the Militia and Volunteers are what the system makes them, and indeed, what Parliament and the country appear to be content they should be.

The case of the Militia officer is discussed elsewhere (p. 196). Any great improvement as long as the present system continues is practically impossible. There is no such reason why there should not be a great improvement in the case of the Volunteer officer. There are already many officers in the Force who have learnt, and learnt thoroughly, nearly every part of their profession. That the number of such officers can be increased is as certain as that if it can be, it ought to be.

But admitting the existence of exceptional cases, admitting that the officers so excepted add to their other excellent qualities the power to command men, which is not always the case, the fact remains that our Auxiliary Forces are under-officered and ill-officered. It is probably true to say that next to the lack of organisation for war, the scarcity of good officers is the greatest danger to which our land forces are exposed at the present time.

HOW OFFICERS ARE NOT MADE.

Various schemes have been prepared from time to time with the object of remedying this unsatis-

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factory state of things. Some of them have a certain amount of merit ; but nearly all of them lack the one essential needed to make real leaders of men. No scheme which proposes merely to *attach* officers for brief periods to units other than their own is of much value. Militia officers may learn a little by going about from training to training, repeating the routine of drill with each new set of men. Volunteer officers may be sent to the headquarters of a Line regiment for a few weeks for purposes of instruction. They, too, will learn something, and will be more able to pass an examination after their course is over than they would have been before they commenced it. But neither the Militia officer nor the Volunteer officer will, as the result of these periods of instruction, have acquired the knowledge of men and the habit of command which come, and come only, from being constantly associated with the men in the barrack square, in the orderly room, and in the playing-fields, as well as on the parade-ground. It is in no way the fault of the officers concerned that they have not learnt that which the education they receive can never give. But in war time the Army and the Nation will be forced to consider not what the officer, contending with many difficulties, was able to learn, but rather what he ought to have learnt in order to lead the troops under his command to victory.

It is not necessary, however, at this stage to discuss at length the value of the training which so many of our officers receive. It is sufficient for the present purpose to point out that, in the first place, we make no effort to compensate for the inferior training of our troops by the superior training of their officers ; and, in the second place, that the practice we adopt is not one which finds favour with other military nations.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XXX.

1. If the Army is not adequate to our needs, its inadequacy is due to want of quality, and not want of numbers.

2. A force superior in quality may defeat a force superior in numbers. A force superior in numbers may on rare occasions defeat a force superior in quality, but a force inferior both in numbers and quality will always be defeated.

3. The British view as to how an army should be prepared for war differs fundamentally from that entertained by foreign nations.

4. The theory that untrained men can safely be led by untrained officers has no confirmation from experience of war.

5. All foreign armies consider that a training of two years and upwards, followed by training in the reserve, is necessary to make a soldier. We consider a fortnight's training sufficient.

CHAPTER XXXI

A FURTHER COMPARISON OF BRITISH AND FOREIGN METHODS

THE ELEMENT OF UNCERTAINTY, AND ITS EFFECT ON PREPARATION FOR WAR.

THE preceding chapter has not sufficed to exhaust the points of divergence between our own practice and that of other military nations. Thus, while those who are responsible for the direction of foreign armies consider it necessary that the exact force which they will have at their disposal in time of war should be known beforehand, we take a totally different view. Even in the Regular Army we preserve a system which makes the strength of the units on mobilisation quite uncertain. In theory this is not so. Every soldier knows that, in practice, it is the case. Many of the Infantry battalions mobilised in 1899 went out short of their war strength. At the present moment there are immense gaps in the organisation and personnel of the Army on mobilisation. The Royal Artillery cannot be mobilised without resorting to all sorts of expedients, the adoption of which is not part of any existing arrangement. The strength of the Royal Army Medical Corps is known, and it is also known that it must be supplemented by large numbers of men supplied by emergency measures. But it is in the other parts of the Army that uncertainty prevails to the

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greatest extent. The Militia is, in practice, regarded as a force to be used abroad in time of war. By law it is confined to the United Kingdom.¹ In the event of hostilities, therefore, the Army Council is absolutely without the means of knowing whether any particular Militia unit will be available at all; and even were this knowledge obtainable, the certainty would be no greater, for it must be remembered that every individual officer and man can elect to serve or to stay at home at his own sweet will. So excellent does this arrangement seem to some of those who have interested themselves in our Army organisation, that it has actually been proposed to take a poll of individual militiamen on the outbreak of war, on the ground that they will go if the war is "popular," and will refuse to go if it is unpopular. In other words, the privates of the Militia are to have the right and the power to control the policy of the country.

THE UNCERTAINTY ATTACHING TO MILITIA AND VOLUNTEER SERVICE.

The uncertainty that attaches to the Militia privates extends to the Militia officers. As has been explained elsewhere, the greater number of these officers do not really belong to the Militia at all, and have only entered it temporarily with the object and intention of getting out of it as soon as they can. No one at the War Office knows, or can pretend to know, which of the Militia battalions will be denuded of officers in the event of war, or to what extent the denudation will take place. In

¹ The Bill introduced in 1905 making service abroad in time of war compulsory for all future entrants into the Militia was strongly objected to by the Party then in opposition. The same Party now proposes to reintroduce the Bill, and it is to be hoped that it will pass at an early date. It must be remembered, however, that no officer or man now serving in the Militia will be affected by the Act.

other words, no one knows, or can know, what will be the numbers or the constitution of any Militia battalion at the only time when its services are of real value, namely, on the outbreak of war.

The uncertainty with regard to the Volunteers is, if possible, even greater than that which prevails in respect to the Militia. Opinion appears to be divided in the Volunteer Force itself as to whether the Volunteers are really intended to take part in foreign wars or not. Many of their self-constituted advocates have declared that the Volunteers must be regarded as a valuable and, indeed, an essential supplement to the Regular Army in case of war abroad, and they point to the fact that a considerable number of men who were actually serving in the Volunteers when war broke out in 1899, or who joined the Force subsequently in order to qualify for active service, actually took the field in South Africa.

On the other hand, there are those who maintain that the Volunteers ought to be strictly limited to the purposes for which they were originally raised, and to which by law they are confined, namely, the defence of Great Britain. On which side the majority is to be found it is difficult to say; but that there is no agreement is certain, and that the Army Council has no materials whatever on which to base a calculation, is equally evident.

Nor does the idea of dispelling this uncertainty appear to commend itself to the country. Any attempt to ascertain beforehand how many Volunteers are willing to serve abroad in any given event, or how many may be relied upon to serve at home under conditions which permit of immediate mobilisation, has hitherto met with little favour and with much opposition; while it has even been considered, by some unwise champions of the Force, as a species of treason to the Volunteers to

inquire whether those who have placed their services at the disposal of their country, are physically fit for the responsibility they have undertaken.

THE "ELASTIC" SYSTEM.

It is not necessary to dwell further upon these illustrations. The fact remains that our military organisation in time of war is subject to infinite uncertainties. The General Staff can never make calculations resting upon any accurate and ascertained basis. Battalions may consist of 100 or of 1,000 men: they may be available for service abroad, or they may not. They may have a full complement of officers, and the officers may be good; or they may be sixty per cent. short of officers, and the officers may be bad. The men may be physically fit for the hardships of a campaign, or they may be totally unfit. A polite formula is used to describe this curious want of method. The system is described as being "elastic," and this "elasticity" is not infrequently referred to as a source of strength. It would not be so regarded in the Royal Navy, in the navy or army of any foreign Power, or indeed in any business on land or sea in which the intelligent application of means to ends was a necessary condition of success. It is possible that the "elastic" system may have great merit, and may tend to ensure success in war. But enough has been said with respect to it to show that it furnishes one more instance of the wide difference which exists between the ideas and methods of other military powers and our own.

THE GENERAL STAFF.

We have seen that we differ from other nations in our view as to what is required in order to obtain efficient private soldiers, non-commissioned

officers, and officers. Let us now consider how far our opinions differ from those of the rest of the world with regard to the all-important question of organisation for war. In every other country but our own it is believed that in order to utilise and direct the military forces of the nation to the best advantage in time of war, it is necessary to form a very highly trained staff, whose attention shall be specially and continuously directed towards solving the military problems peculiar to the nation concerned. Members of this staff are selected in the first instance on account of their peculiar proficiency for the task to which they are asked to devote themselves, and, having been so selected, are continuously trained throughout the whole of their military career. We have not hitherto thought any such precautions necessary. Up to a very recent date, no attempt had been made to provide any continuous course of training for those whose duty it was to deal with the great military problems of the Empire. We have, it is true, established a Committee of Imperial Defence, a body which is undoubtedly better than nothing. As at present constituted, however, it is still a mere amateur association composed of individuals who may, or may not, for their own pleasure, have devoted a certain amount of time to the consideration of naval and military problems, but who most assuredly do not in any way represent a continuous policy, sanctioned by the authority which prolonged and scientific study can alone confer.

It is true also that, at a very recent date, a first step has been taken along a path which may ultimately lead us to that much-to-be-desired consummation, the creation of a real General Staff for the British Army. But those who imagine that the neglect of a century can be repaired in a year or two are very much mistaken. A true General Staff cannot be created by calling officers by new titles,

or by alterations in their uniform. Twenty years of steady teaching, the commission and repairing of many faults, the overcoming of many prejudices, stand between us and the realisation of the hopes of the most sanguine. Whatever, therefore, the Committee of Defence and the General Staff may ultimately become, it is unreasonable to pretend that, at the present time, they resemble the great organisations by which foreign armies are directed. In other words, in this matter, as in so many others, our methods differ entirely from those which commend themselves to other military nations. These nations consider that the organisation and direction of armies can be best dealt with by those who have devoted a life-time of specialised study to the work. We think otherwise, and believe that these things can best be done by officers and civilians, whom the routine of the Service or the accident of politics may, from time to time, have introduced into the offices in which papers connected with organisation, and with such military preparations as this country indulges in, are usually filed.

THE COMPOSITION OF THE FIELD ARMY.

Again, in the matter of the composition of our armies on the one hand and those of foreign countries on the other, a great difference is noticeable. In the text-books of every foreign army, and, for the matter of that, in the text-books of our own Army, it is laid down that the military force should be composed of certain elements in fixed proportions: that the Artillery and Cavalry should bear a certain proportion to the Infantry; that the reserves should bear a certain proportion to the troops with the colours; that every fighting unit should be made effective by the addition of a due proportion of those ancillary, but

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all-important branches of an army, the ammunition trains, supply columns, medical and sanitary departments, financial and civil branches, and so on. It is also laid down that success in war can best be obtained by creating, in peace time, the cadres which will be actually utilised in time of war, and by not only assigning to them the staff which they will require on mobilisation, but by informing them of the duties which they will be required to perform. But the practice of other nations and the theory of our own bear no relation whatever to our own practice. No one has ever pretended that there is any scientific relation between the numbers of the various arms which we maintain. In no other army would a force of 287,000 Cavalry and Infantry be maintained practically without field artillery.¹

Again, it is notorious that there is absolutely no reason whatever, either for the amount, the distribution, or the armament of our Militia and Volunteer Artillery. The position of the Militia is, of course, an anomaly from beginning to end. Originally created solely as a territorial force intended for the defence of the United Kingdom, it has come to be regarded in practice as a force on which we must always rely to supplement the Regular Army abroad. The practice corresponds with the belief, and yet so curiously illogical is our organisation that, to this day, not only is the Militia confined by law to service in the United Kingdom, but absolutely no provision is made for its utilisation abroad. Every time it is so utilised everything has to be improvised, as if such an occurrence was absolutely novel and had never been anticipated.

¹ A single brigade (three batteries of four guns each) of Militia Field Artillery and the two 4-gun batteries of the Honourable Artillery Company form an exception to this general rule. But the exception, as is so often the case in our arrangements, is the result of accident, and not of design.

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THE PECULIARITIES OF EXPERIENCE.

It will be observed, therefore, that in a great number of instances our methods of dealing with military problems are radically different from those adopted by other great Military Powers, whose experience of war and its consequences is certainly not less than our own. There is a favourite opinion in this country that we have little or nothing to learn from foreigners, that our position is so peculiar, our past history so fortunate, our character so remarkable and so unique, that we can afford to be a law unto ourselves; that we can, and indeed ought, to remain indifferent to the experience of others less fortunate than ourselves. Those who have read this and the preceding chapters, must form their own opinions as to how far this superior view can with advantage be adopted in dealing with military problems. There are perhaps some who have come to the conclusion that war is war, with its rules and its penalties, wherever that war may be fought, and whoever may be the combatants. They will doubtless be of opinion that the view expressed in these pages is justified and that we cannot any longer afford to neglect the lessons which the fortunes and misfortunes of other countries have taught them, and that if we do neglect these lessons, no special providence will intervene in our favour to exempt us from the consequences which inevitably fall upon those who trifle with war.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XXXI.

1. In foreign armies it is considered absolutely necessary to know beforehand with what force a war can be undertaken. In this country no such knowledge is considered requisite.
2. In this country we do not know whether either the units or the individuals whom we train and pay in peace time, will be available for fighting purposes in time of war.

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3. In other countries it is considered necessary to have a highly trained professional staff. Up to the present time it has not been considered necessary to have such a staff in this country.

4. In foreign countries a collection of armed men is not regarded as an army, unless it is organised as such and provided with the artillery, cavalry, train and other ancillary portions of an army. In this country we entertain a precisely opposite view.

5. There is great reason to believe that we cannot safely afford to neglect the lessons which the experience of other countries is capable of teaching us.

CHAPTER XXXII

“ATHANASIUS CONTRA MUNDUM”

A RECAPITULATION.

It will be convenient at this stage to recapitulate the points of divergence between the principles and practice of the great Military Powers on the one hand, and those of this country on the other, which were enumerated in the preceding chapter.

The great Military Powers of the world believe that, in order to produce an army capable of succeeding in war, the following measures are necessary :—

1. The private soldier must be twenty years of age and upwards. He must be of good physique, and must represent the average education and intelligence of the nation. He must be continuously trained for two years, or more, under Regular officers. He must, when relegated to the reserve, be kept fit for war by periodic training under his own officers.

The Parliament and people of this country believe that the Regular soldier may wisely be enlisted at the age of eighteen, and the militiaman at the age of seventeen¹; that he may be taken—that, as a rule, he shall be taken—from the least educated and the least intelligent part of the population. They believe that it is safe to accept, for the Regular Army and for the Militia, men whose physique is

¹ Which often means sixteen, or even fifteen.

below that of the average of their age in civil life. They believe that, in the case of the Volunteers, numbering 240,000, no effort whatever need be made to ascertain whether the men in the ranks are physically fit for service.

They believe that, as far as the Auxiliary Forces are concerned, the soldier need only be trained for a period varying from ten hours to twenty-eight days in the year; and that his training may safely be entrusted to officers almost as inexperienced as himself; to officers who, as a rule, have no knowledge of either war or manœuvres, and who, in many cases, are only casually and temporarily attached to the unit with which they serve. That, when relegated to the Reserve, the soldier need receive no further training of any sort or kind.

2. The great Military Powers believe that officers and non-commissioned officers must be very highly and specially trained, and they consider that the less efficient the rank and file the greater must be the attention given to the education and training of those who are to lead them.

We believe that, for the Auxiliary branches of the Army, non-commissioned officers without any serious training are sufficient, and that so far from the principle of improving the officers to compensate for the inferiority of the rank and file being a sound one, we can safely rely upon partially trained officers to lead partially trained men.

3. The great Military Powers believe that it is impossible to devote too much attention to the training of the commissioned officer; that his military education should begin at a date antecedent to his entry into the Service, and that it should be continued till the last day on which he wears his uniform.

We believe that, while the education of our Regular officers before they join may safely be left to the public schools, and may be almost wholly

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neglected after a few months' instruction at Sandhurst,¹ the officers of the Auxiliary Forces need not attain to any educational standard, need possess but, the merest smattering of professional knowledge, and need have no serious training at all.

WHAT IF WE ARE RIGHT?

It will be apparent from what has been said that the difference of opinion between the great Military Powers and ourselves as to the composition and management of an army is very great. It is indeed fundamental. That both views can be wholly right is almost inconceivable. It is of vital importance to us to know which is right and which is wrong. The consequences of a mistake may be tragic. It is conceivable that the other Powers are all of them wrong, and that we alone are right. "Athanasius contra mundum" is a striking, but a rare figure in history. If we are right, then indeed the error into which everybody else has fallen is gigantic, and our discovery is unparalleled. If the period of service adopted by other nations, the elaborate organisation of foreign armies, the high training of foreign officers are unnecessary, then, indeed, our neighbours, our rivals, and our potential enemies are to be pitied. What can be more lamentable than the waste of so much time and so much energy? It is certain that the nation which alone has found out a way infinitely cheaper, infinitely easier and simpler than that of any of its rivals, is to be congratulated upon a discovery which must inevitably give it a military and economic superiority over all others.

¹ The Staff College at Camberley, now supplemented by the New College at Quetta, forms a happy exception to this rule. The various examinations which are held after an officer has obtained his commission are tests of the knowledge he may have acquired, but they by no means supply the need for education.

BUT WHAT IF WE ARE WRONG?

But if, by chance, other nations are right and we are wrong, what then? That is one of those very solemn questions which the people of this country, happy in the perpetual enjoyment of party strife, conscious of their own immense superiority to every one else, living on catchwords, and, above all, believing in the mystic power of "muddling through," do not like any one to ask, and which they are quite determined no one shall answer under pain of general denunciation.

But there are some questions that have an unpleasant habit of answering themselves. It is just possible that this may be one of them, and it is therefore worth while, even at the risk of incurring the censure which always awaits those who venture to challenge the time-honoured policy of "go-as-you-please," to suggest that the possibility of our rivals being right, and of our being wrong, must be taken into consideration.

AN ARGUMENT AND ITS CONCLUSION.

It is perhaps not unfair to say that those countries which have suffered greatly from the results of defeat in war, have more knowledge of what war means, and what defeat entails than we, who have enjoyed so long and happy an immunity from that terrible affliction. Those countries have all come to the conclusion that, in order to protect themselves from defeat, their armies must be thoroughly and scientifically trained, and that the other precautions indicated above must be taken. But it will be said, and it often is said, that the very fact that other nations have been defeated, and that our soil has remained inviolate proves that there is a vast difference between the circumstances of foreign countries, on the one hand, and

of our own country on the other,—a difference which not only explains, but justifies, the peculiar and exceptional methods which we have thought fit to adopt. As a general proposition, this statement is indisputable. We have been very fortunate in the past, and our insular position has so far protected us against great military disasters. But it is possible to make this admission to the fullest extent, and yet to entertain the gravest doubts as to the wisdom of our existing military system. It is possible that we shall never be engaged in a war abroad with any great Military Power. If the probability could be transformed into a certainty, it is obvious that the greater part of our military organisation would become wholly superfluous, and, that, save perhaps for the purpose of policing India, the Regular Army on a foreign-service basis might be, and ought to be, dispensed with. Public opinion, however, has not yet reached this point, and no statesman of either party has yet contended that the Regular Army can be got rid of. On the contrary, there seems to be a general consensus of opinion to the effect that now, more than ever before, it is necessary to provide for a great reinforcement of the Regular Army in time of war. It is on the assumption that this view is generally accepted that it is proposed to examine the wisdom of the course which we are asked by some would-be reformers to follow in order to give effect to it.

A LESSON FROM HISTORY.

Briefly, we are asked to reduce the Regular Army, both officers and men, and to rely upon the Auxiliary Forces to reinforce it in time of war. It is not necessary here to go over ground which has already been trodden, and to explain once more how ill-suited the organisation of the Auxiliary Forces is to serve this particular purpose. But one great question remains to be examined. Can

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we safely put a half-trained, half-organised amateur army into the field against Regular troops of the modern type, with any reasonable hope of success? There are few things which can be predicted with absolute certainty about war; but there are some matters about which so much testimony exists, that a presumption is created which is not easily upset. It is no exaggeration to say that the practically universal testimony of military history since fighting began is to the effect that, given equal numbers, or anything like equal numbers, trained troops under trained officers will defeat untrained troops under imperfectly trained officers. The ingenuity and research of the military historian may doubtless reveal some forgotten instance which seems to establish a contrary doctrine. Andreas Hofer, it is true, with a comparatively untrained body of men, defeated a French general and took several thousand prisoners. Within a twelvemonth Hofer's army was destroyed, his country was occupied, and he himself was a prisoner. The early battles of the French Revolution have been cited as supplying another exception to the general rule, and undoubtedly the battles of Valmy and Fleurus were fought by comparatively untrained troops against a highly disciplined, though badly led, army. There are many circumstances which contribute to stamp the French armies under Moreau as exceptional in their character. But the case may stand for what it is worth—as a rare exception to an almost universal rule.

A FALSE ANALOGY.

The case of the Boers in the Transvaal is constantly referred to, but it would be hard to find a more misleading analogy. For the particular warfare in which they were engaged the Boers were peculiarly well trained. From their child-

hood the majority of them had been trained to ride, to shoot, to study country, to take cover, to travel long distances, to endure hardship, and, though not under strict military discipline as we understand it, they were taught to obey. Above all, the Boers were constantly trained, in peace, to do that which they would have to do in time of war. Let us apply any one of these tests to the troops with which it is proposed to reinforce our Regular Army, and in regard to every one the force, as a whole, will fail to meet the test.¹

It will doubtless be said that the Boers excelled in shooting, that our Auxiliary Forces contain many good shots, and might contain many more, and that they will in consequence be of great value in the field. No one can deny that good rifle-shooting is of value, though there seems some reason to doubt whether, after all, our Army did not contain as many good marksmen as did that of the Boers. But it is remarkable how unimportant, in relation to other qualifications, fine shooting seems to be. In the record of the Russo-Japanese War it is scarcely possible to find any allusion to an advantage gained by what may be called "Bisley shooting." Once or twice, it is true, the practice of selected marksmen was of value; but, as a rule, it was the disciplined advance of men who fired when they were told, advanced when they were told, and entrenched when they were told, that secured the victory for the winning side. Shooting apart, how many of the other qualifications which made the Boers such effective soldiers in South Africa are to be found amongst the slightly trained troops which constitute the bulk of our Auxiliary Forces, and how many of them are likely to be imparted during the few days' instruction which these troops receive from time to time?

¹ The nearest approach to a general exception is furnished by the Imperial Yeomanry.

THE DANGER OF “THE SECOND BEST.”

Another very dangerous fallacy has to be combated in this connection.

Those who advocate the substitution of very young and only half-trained soldiers for regular troops frequently defend the proposal, not on the ground that the former are as good as the latter, but because they are the best that circumstances will permit us to provide. It must be clearly understood that, in war, “second best” is another word for “defeated.”

The second-best fleet lies at the bottom of the Japanese Sea; the second-best army was shattered on the plains of Liaoyang.

So it has always been; so it will always be. Where two forces are equal in numbers, training, and *personnel*, the issue must always be uncertain, and victory will lie with that army which has the ablest commander and the most favourable position, and will depend upon a number of considerations which cannot with any certainty be determined beforehand.

But where two armies meet, of which one is, by universal consent, inferior to the other, the inferior army will be beaten. And defeat cannot be measured in fine percentages. An army 5 per cent. inferior to its opponent does not remain after a defeat 95 per cent. as good as the victor. It is “smashed.” Beaten once, its subsequent defeats, as a rule, increase in number and severity in a geometrical ratio.

AN ARMY FIGHTING IN ITS OWN COUNTRY.

To the fallacy just referred to must be added another which has obtained great favour with the public of this country, and which is responsible for many very erroneous and dangerous judgments.

Every one who is acquainted with the discussions on military matters which take place in Parliament, on the platform, and in the Press is familiar with the phrase, "They will be fighting in their own country." To many, who are quite ready to admit in a general way the danger of going to war with untrained or half-trained troops, it is an article of faith that, provided the troops in question are called upon to fight within the geographical limits of their own country, they will by that circumstance become endowed with a special virtue and excellence, and will be able to accomplish that which they could not be expected to achieve in a foreign country.

But the idea that an army fighting in its own country has any advantage whatever over an enemy by reason of that fact alone is a pure and, indeed, a mischievous delusion. It is no exaggeration to say that the advantage will, nine times out of ten, be the other way. In the first place, an army fighting in its own country will, as a rule, be the army of a nation which has suffered defeat. A British army fighting on British soil must of necessity be the army of a defeated nation; for it can only be by the defeat of the Navy that an enemy can obtain a footing on our shores. But a beaten army, or even the army of a beaten nation, is an army which has already lost that all-important aid to victory—the possession of unimpaired prestige and the confidence born of success. For this reason, if for no other, troops fighting in their own country ought to be of very high quality to withstand the demoralisation which almost always follows a reverse. But there are other, and scarcely less important causes which put the army fighting on its native soil at a disadvantage. Such an army is naturally indisposed to destroy buildings, to interfere with communications, to levy contributions on the inhabitants. The enemy

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operates under no such restraints. He can and will destroy buildings for his own advantage and for purely military purposes, without the slightest regard to the feelings of the owners. He will levy contributions at his own sweet will, and will destroy communications, knowing that, if he be victorious, the conquered people will have to pay the cost of restoring them.

THE FATE OF ARMIES FIGHTING ON THEIR OWN SOIL.

And yet, despite these well-known and incontrovertible facts, the belief that some mystic virtue attaches to troops fighting in their own country, obtains widely in this country, and has a marked effect in distorting public opinion, and in diverting the public mind from the real danger to which the country is exposed.

That this should be so, in view of the many examples of the falseness of the popular belief, is singular. In no other country in Europe would such a misconception be possible; experience is a great teacher, and her pupils must learn whether they will or no.

Prussia still remembers Jena; Austria has not forgotten Sadowa; in France the memory of the defeats of her armies in the east, in the north, and in the west is still painfully fresh.

But we have no such memories. The march of the Scots to Derby might have ended in a tragedy, but did end in a farce; and it is more than a century and a half since Charles Edward turned his back on London. The people of this country, having been happily spared a practical lesson in what war means, have shown no inclination whatever to pursue the study on its merits. No nation has done more fighting than our own, but no people knows less of what war is than that which inhabits these Islands.

AN EXAMPLE FROM ESSEX.

But, for those who desire to learn, the material for instruction is ample and accessible.

In 1904 joint manœuvres, in which the Fleet and the Army were combined, took place.¹

The operations included a landing on an open coast and subsequent operations against a force on shore. This is not the place in which to speak of the lessons which may be deduced from the actual operations of landing and re-embarking, though they are many and highly instructive. But a word must be said of the movements which took place on shore. The district selected for the manœuvres was the south-eastern portion of the county of Essex. The selection was made with the express object of gaining experience in the movement of troops in an enclosed country. It is to be regretted that, owing to the unsatisfactory state of the law, and the consequent difficulty of obtaining suitable ground for the movement of troops, manœuvres have hitherto been conducted almost exclusively upon unenclosed land—on Salisbury Plain, in the neighbourhood of Aldershot, on Dartmoor, or on Cannock Chase. Every one of these districts may be regarded as exceptional; no one of them is typical of England as a whole. Very numerous enclosures are characteristic of nine-tenths of the country, and the manœuvre area in Essex was a true sample of the bulk.

On this characteristic piece of British soil a British force was attacked by a small, well-organised army coming from over the sea.²

¹ It is a singular reflection that these were the first manœuvres of the kind, and this despite the fact that this country cannot possibly engage in war without either crossing the sea or trying to prevent some one else crossing it.

² Whether this army could ever have got into Essex is a question which is not discussed here. The argument, for the moment, is directed solely to the question of whether troops gain by the mere fact that they are fighting in their own country.

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LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND ITS VALUE.

Did the defending force gain anything whatever by the fact that it was in its own country, or is there any reason to believe that it would have gained by that fact if the attacking force had been composed of foreign instead of British regiments? The answer to both questions must be in the negative.

The troops who formed the Colchester garrison¹ had no special knowledge of the district between Colchester and Clacton, though the fact of their having resided for some months in the neighbourhood may have given the officers some familiarity with the roads.

But had the force been, as in case of an actual landing it would have been, drawn together from many places, the troops so assembled would have possessed no local knowledge whatever. The Tower Hamlets Militia or a London Volunteer Corps would be far less acquainted with the country, its probable resources, and its peculiarities, than many a Continental regiment. A Londoner lying behind a hedge half-way between Colchester and Clacton would be an Englishman and fighting in his own country, but neither of these facts would contribute in any special way towards his military efficiency under the existing conditions. He would certainly fight no better, and—for reasons which have been suggested elsewhere—he might fight rather worse, than if he were advancing as part of a victorious army into the heart of a foreign country.

THE ADVANTAGE OF THE OFFENSIVE IN ENCLOSED COUNTRY.

Nor could the character of the country, or the fact that the British force was on the defensive, be regarded as points in favour of the defenders. The

¹ The defending force.

testimony of every officer engaged in the manœuvres in question was unanimous to the contrary.

"The advantage lay with the attack" was the universal opinion.

"The enclosures not only favoured the attack, but they specially favoured a highly trained, well-disciplined force as against imperfectly trained and ill-disciplined troops."

THE NEED FOR TRAINING, DISCIPLINE, AND ORGANISATION.

It is easy to see why these views should have been so generally entertained. In Essex the fields were many, the enclosures formidable. The horizon was often not a hundred yards away. Every group was left to itself, and knew nothing of what was going on to right or left, in front or in rear; yet something was always going on, in front and in rear, and more especially on the flanks. The attacking army was always advancing towards an objective. The commander of the attacking army knew what that objective was; his opponent did not know. The defenders could not tell by observation whether they were being out-flanked or not; they could not tell whether the enemy were approaching his objective or not, for they did not know what that objective was. For all these reasons the attack had the advantage. As far as the character of the *personnel* was concerned the two forces were equally matched; for the regiments on both sides belonged to the Regular Army. But there seems little reason to doubt that, had this been otherwise, had the attacking force alone been highly trained and under the complete control of its officers, that force would have enjoyed not only the advantage which always accrues to training and good discipline, but an added advantage due to the peculiar conditions of the combat.

The fancy picture of the dogged rifleman, lying behind a hedge at the border of his own farmyard, shooting down the unintelligent routine soldiers, as they came into view, with unerring aim and unflinching courage, was not realised, and, indeed, never will be. A general who loses control over his army is lost, and never is an army more difficult to control than when it is scattered in many groups without visible communication with one another, and removed, in almost every instance, from the eye of the higher commanders. It is then that discipline and the habit of instant obedience to orders become invaluable. It is then that a highly organised system of communication by signal, by telegraph, by telephone, by word of mouth, is absolutely essential if any unity of action is to be maintained. A hundred men in a field gain a brilliant and apparently conclusive success over fifty of the enemy in the next field. Proud of their success, they advance; they are winning—who can doubt it? But from some distant, unknown point there comes a peremptory order to retire, it may be to a point ten miles away. The man who sends the order knows that the real battle is going on somewhere else; that ten miles away his flank is in danger; that the little local successes in another part of the battlefield are of no account. Therefore he dispatches his order. An intelligent trained man must write the order; a trained man must convey it or transmit it; a trained man must receive, understand, and carry it out. Disciplined men must hear the order and obey it without question and at whatever sacrifice. Last of all, trained officers and non-commissioned officers must get their men away from a compromising situation, must realise what is the intended destination, and must find their way to that destination amid the chaos of battle aggravated by the infinite confusion incident to narrow roads, high hedges, and obstructions of every kind.

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There can indeed be no doubt that professional opinion was right in its dictum with respect to the Essex Manœuvres. In enclosed country the advantage lies with the attack, and fighting in enclosed country demands even greater training, discipline, and organisation to ensure success than fighting in the open country.

THE MORAL.

From all which it may be seen that we need not go further than the limits of our own country to learn some very important lessons with regard to war; and among these lessons is that which this chapter is intended to enforce, namely, that troops which cannot be relied upon to gain the victory if they have to fight an enemy abroad, are not more, but less likely to gain the victory if they are called upon to fight the same enemy at home.

A LESSON FROM FRANCE.

One more illustration must be included in this already long chapter. Its object is to deal yet another blow at the dangerous fallacy that "second-best" troops can be relied upon provided they fight in their own country. A brief reference has been made elsewhere to General Chanzy's campaign upon the Loire in the year 1871. But the subject has so much intrinsic interest, and its importance has been so much enhanced by recent attempts to draw from those operations a lesson which they do not teach, that a more detailed reference to them is permissible.

Speaking in the House of Commons on the 8th March, 1906, in support of his proposal to establish a partially trained territorial army, the Secretary of State for War¹ declared that the duty of furnishing

¹ The Right Hon. R. B. Haldane.

a reserve for the Regular Army in time of war must be "the work of a citizen army," and he continued as follows :—

"In the Franco-German War, after the defeat of the main part of the Regular Army of France, Gambetta, a civilian, made a People's Army, which, in conjunction with the Army of the Loire, gave infinitely more trouble to the German strategists than the Regular Army had given. I read the other day something written by Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia, who took a distinguished part in that war. He said, 'There is for a leader nothing more oppressive than a situation that is not clear, nothing more trying than bands of armed irregular troops aided by the population and nature of the country, and relying for support on a strong army in the neighbourhood.'"

It is interesting to know that Prince Frederick Charles was for a moment embarrassed, but his embarrassment does not seem to have lasted long, or to have greatly benefited the French. Let us see what are the facts which afforded so much encouragement to the Secretary of State for War, and which led him to cite this particular episode as an argument in favour of an improvised army. In July, 1870, the French troops crossed the German frontier at Saarbruck. On the 2nd September the Army of the Meuse surrendered at Sedan. In the same month the improvised army of France, the half-trained National Guards and the untrained Mobiles, were called out for service. It was from the Mobiles that Chanzy's Army of the Loire was principally reinforced, and it is to the performances of this army that the Secretary of State alluded. With the surrender at Sedan, the need for defending the national soil became evident to all men. Paris was threatened, Metz was invested. The Army of the Loire did its best. In November a small German force was compelled to evacuate Orleans,

and to General Chanzy was entrusted the duty of following up this success and relieving the pressure upon Paris. It will be well to let General Chanzy tell his own story of what took place. Describing the retreat of his troops from the Loire, he writes as follows :—

"It was necessary to send a detachment of gendarmerie in advance by the principal roads to stop fugitives. But they could not exercise any surveillance over the paths which intersect the country in every direction, and Le Mans was soon choked with this disorganised mob, who, deprived of their organisation, and absolutely without discipline, presented an aspect at once miserable and shameful to any army. It was, however, a consolation to be able to say that if such examples were only too frequent, the true men who remained in the ranks—and these were the majority—by the order of their march and the vigour of their resistance, concealed from the enemy a breakdown which can only be explained by the youth and military inexperience of those troops who failed.¹

"The first news that reached me was that General Lalande, who had been posted on the plateau of La Tuilerie in the centre of the line with his Breton Mobiles and artillery, had during the night spontaneously evacuated this magnificent position without defending it, and in the face of a very inferior force. The Mobiles of Ile-et-Vilaine took to flight on the discharge of the first shell; the enemy occupied La Tuilerie without firing a shot. At two o'clock in the morning the Admiral reported that the troops who had been with great difficulty assembled for this attack, fled and broke up at the first shot fired, and that it was impossible to retake the position; that the division posted on his left had disbanded during the night and

¹ There was a considerable number of sailors and regular troops in this column.

abandoned its positions, which were at once occupied by the Prussians; and that with the exception of Roquebrune's Division, the troops, carried away by panic and an incomprehensible demoralisation, had for the most part deserted: that it was impossible to count on them, and retreat became inevitable."

On the 16th January, 1871, two months after the evacuation of Orleans, Prince Frederick Charles, the officer who is cited as having been so much impressed by the value of the army opposed to him, was able to report that during the ten days between the 6th and 16th January, he and the Grand Duke of Mecklenburgh had taken more than 22,000 unwounded prisoners, two colours, nineteen guns, more than a thousand ammunition wagons, and a large quantity of material. The Army of the Loire was broken up, and with it Paris had lost its best hope of relief.¹

And this is the example which is held up to us for imitation by the Secretary of State for War! The conclusions drawn from it by a well-known writer on military subjects² are so forcible and so just that it is permissible to quote them.

"The disadvantages," says the writer, "of depending on untrained Volunteers, or half-drilled Militia, or *levées en masse*, or anything of the kind, became painfully apparent to the French Commander-in-Chief, and through him to every nation in the world, except perhaps our own. . . . The military virtues of Chanzy and his subordinates were remarkable, but the evils of want of discipline and training, and the necessity for making war a serious business, were very clearly demonstrated. . . . What is the lesson? The lesson is that in modern Europe it is utterly useless to trifle with the art of war. . . . That if a nation wishes to exist, no amount of money will save it. The French had

¹ Hozier.

² Dr. Miller Maguire, *Chanzy's Campaign*, Woolwich R.A. Inst., 1894.

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money without any limit. . . . Their numbers were legion ; it is hard to tell how many Chanzy had ; he probably had 150,000 ; in these positions he had at any rate 118,000, perhaps more ; he was in his own country, with the world to supply him, with patriotism at his back, and with a brilliant orator to kindle enthusiasm. Yet in the worst possible weather he was beaten by half his number, and many of these could not be engaged in the battle."

There is probably not a soldier in any country in the world who would question the truth of this judgment.

"CLEAR THINKING."

Before dismissing the subject, it is worth while noting as an evidence of the want of that "clear thinking" which has been recommended to Parliament and the Nation, that while by universal admission the principal, if not the only rôle of the Regular Army of this country is to fight abroad, the host of irregular bands who are to be the support and comfort of that Army can by no possibility operate outside the limits of the United Kingdom. The most convinced advocate of a "go-as-you-please army," "decentralised, worked by military local government, that is to say, by the people themselves,"¹ would hardly suggest that the Navy should be employed in transporting this crowd to a foreign country to play the part of the Mobiles and Franc-tireurs who are supposed to have given so much trouble to Prince Frederick Charles.

Enough has, perhaps, been said in this chapter to raise a very strong presumption that in the sharp conflict of opinion and practice which exists

¹ See speech of Secretary of State for War, House of Commons, 8th March, 1906.

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between ourselves and foreign nations, it is we and not they who are wrong. If it be true that untrained and ill-officered armies are always beaten by armies that are well trained and well officered, it is clearly high time to transform our armies from the category of the defeated to the category of the conquerors. If it be true that an army fighting in its own country, so far from having an initial advantage over its adversary, is in a position of special danger and difficulty, then it is time to reconsider the cheerful optimism that adds 50 per cent. to the value of our armies because they will be fighting at home. Above all, if these things be true, does it behove us to weigh with jealous care any proposals which have for their object the multiplication of mobs, and the destruction of the small disciplined and effective force which the country possesses, and which has never yet wholly failed it.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XXXII.

1. There is a fundamental difference between the great Military Powers and ourselves as to what the training, composition, and management of an army ought to be.

2. If foreign nations are wrong, we are right, and *vice versa*. But if we are wrong, we are very wrong, and the consequences of an error may be fatal.

3. If it be the fact that our army is principally required for fighting abroad, and will need to be greatly expanded in time of war to enable it to do so successfully, our present organisation is singularly ill-adapted to the end in view.

4. History teaches us that the trained and disciplined army will always defeat the untrained and undisciplined army.

5. The lessons of the South African War on this point have been greatly misunderstood.

6. There is no place for "second best" in war.

7. It is a fallacy to suppose that an army necessarily derives any advantage from the fact that it is fighting in its own country. As a matter of fact, an army fighting under such conditions is at a great disadvantage.

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8. The Essex Manœuvres (1904) furnish valuable lessons for our guidance.

9. In an enclosed country the offensive has an advantage over the defensive: and discipline and training are more than ever essential to success.

10. The campaign of the Loire (1871) is a striking example of the impotence of ill-trained troops in their own country fighting against an inferior, but highly trained force.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE REGIMENTAL SYSTEM, ITS QUALITIES AND DEFECTS

THE LAW OF CHANGE IN THE NAVY AND IN THE
ARMY.

THE British Army is in many respects like the British Constitution: it has grown, it has never been made. Like the British Constitution, it possesses many qualities which are admirable because they are the outcome of natural development, and because they correspond with national peculiarities.

But all that has grown is not good, and much that was good when it first grew is good no longer. No one who was merely desirous of utilising the resources of the nation for the purpose of creating an economical and effective fighting machine under modern conditions, would have designed the British Army in its present form, or anything in the least like it.

But it is rarely possible in an old and settled country to build on clear foundations, and any one who attempted to deal with the Army without a thorough comprehension of, and respect for its past history would be destined to failure from the outset.

Nevertheless, the fact that the Army has never been adapted to modern conditions must not be forgotten. It is the fashion in some quarters to

protest against changes, and to declare that all the Army needs is to be let alone.

The appeal is one which always finds a sympathetic reception, and not unnaturally. It would be thoroughly justified, if it could be alleged that at any time in our history the land forces of the Crown had been deliberately organised upon a scientific and rational basis. Enough, however, has been said in these pages to show that such has never been the case. No definite principle has ever dominated the organisation of the Army; no such principle dominates it now. A much closer approach to a scientific organisation has been reached in the case of the Navy; though even in that Service there have been periods in which the lessons learnt in war have been forgotten, or allowed to fall into abeyance in time of peace. But if the idea of scientific organisation for war in the Navy has at times been neglected, it has of late been developed in a very high degree, and greatly to the advantage of the Nation.

During the last few years the Navy has, in fact, been reorganised from top to bottom. Changes of the most drastic character have been introduced into the *personnel* and the *matériel*. The character, number, and disposition of the ships have been changed. The terms of service for officers and men have been radically altered. The system of education in every branch has been revolutionised. The whole method of Dockyard work has been altered. Above all, the Navy has been prepared for war as it has never been prepared before, and this immense improvement has been found compatible with a large reduction of expenditure.

This last step in advance has not been purchased by sacrificing that which was of value, but by the reverse process of ruthlessly getting rid of that which was not of value for fighting purposes.

It would be an exaggeration to pretend that all

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these things have been accomplished without exciting some heartburning, and without arousing some controversy.

But as to the general result there is practically no difference of opinion. The Navy, after undergoing this reduction, is more powerful, more popular, and more efficient for war than it has ever been. The Navy is sometimes spoken of as a very conservative force, yet few naval officers have been found to declare that change was to be deprecated, and that the organisation which was effective under St. Vincent was necessarily suited to the conditions of modern warfare.

There can be no doubt, however, that on the whole the organisation of the Navy under St. Vincent was reasonably suited to the conditions of his time. The same thing cannot be said of the organisation of the Army from 1805 to 1815, or at any time since that period. Our successes in the Peninsula were achieved by the troops under a brilliant leader in spite of, and not because of the organisation at headquarters. There is, therefore, no *prima facie* reason to believe that the law of change is less applicable to the Army than to the Navy. It is, of course, perfectly reasonable to object to particular changes if they are not considered likely to promote the welfare of the Army; but the argument in favour of leaving things as they are is not entitled to weight. Change is necessary, and the only question is what the character of that change ought to be.

THE REGIMENTAL SYSTEM IN THE BRITISH ARMY.

It is the belief of the present writer that far deeper down than any of the obvious deficiencies in our military arrangements, lies a source of weakness and danger which will continue to stultify any merely superficial changes as long as it remains untreated. It is a source of weakness which is the

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more serious because it cannot be touched, much less removed, by any hasty methods, and because it is intimately bound up with some of the best and noblest sentiments and traditions of the Army.

It is no exaggeration to say that to the regimental system the Army owes half its value as a fighting force, and yet it is equally certain that the same regimental system in its present shape is the principal obstacle in the way of real reform in our military system.

It is a singular fact that the system which prevails in the British Cavalry and in the British Infantry, is unknown to any other fighting force in this country or elsewhere. The various regiments of the Cavalry and Infantry are in fact small, and in many cases, very pleasant clubs, which have their membership, their rules, and their subscriptions like any club in Pall Mall. In some cases the subscription is high. Officers who cannot guarantee the possession of a certain income are practically debarred from entry; and, once in the club, it is practically impossible to get out of it. The system has many attractions, but it has very grave defects. The results of it are curious, and not altogether desirable. It is partly in consequence of this system that while the Navy has become a profession, the Army has to a large extent remained a social institution. It is under this system that the strange anomaly has grown up which makes it true to say of the British Cavalry and Infantry that "the better the regiment, the worse the promotion." It is hardly possible to conceive a state of things less conducive to efficiency.

PROMOTION AND TRANSFER IN THE ARMY AND NAVY COMPARED.

As a matter of fact, the regimental system as it still exists in the Cavalry and Infantry is a survival.

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It was at one time common to all foreign armies, and to the whole of our own. On the Continent, as well as in this country, there were proprietary regiments called after their owners, administered by their colonels, and absolutely segregated from all other regiments. One by one, foreign nations abandoned a practice which was found to be inconsistent with the organisation of a modern army, and it is interesting to note that while our own Cavalry and Infantry still retain the peculiarities of the old system, the Royal Navy, including the whole of the Royal Marines, the Royal Artillery, Horse, Field, and Garrison, the Royal Engineers, and the Departmental Corps are all organised on the modern basis. Is our system a good one for the Army? The answer can hardly be in doubt. A system which tends to divide the whole Army into cliques and compartments, and which often makes merit a bar to promotion, cannot be defended. It is only necessary to compare the organisation of our two great Services to note the immense difference which exists, and to understand how great are the advantages of the naval plan. The diagrams "A" and "B" serve to indicate the nature of the difference. Throughout the Navy there is but one word to describe the association of officers and men, and that word is "The Service." It is no exaggeration to say that the word is rarely used in a similar sense in connection with the Army.

In the Navy, from the admiral to the cadet, from the warrant officer to the boy, every one belongs to "The Service." In the Army a man is a gunner, a sapper belongs to the Brigade, the 60th, the Gordons, the Gloucestershire, the Royals, the 10th, or whatever it may be. In the Navy the *camaraderie* of the officers extends laterally. All the cadets are comrades, and the elder ones are the friends of the younger midshipmen. The midshipmen are all

DIAGRAM ILLUSTRATING THE LINES OF DIVISION IN THE ARMY AND NAVY RESPECTIVELY

THE NAVY
THE ARMY.

A. THE SERVICE.

| |
|------------------|
| Admirals. |
| Captains. |
| Commanders. |
| Lieutenants. |
| Sub-Lieutenants. |
| Midshipmen. |
| Cadets. |

B.

The Household Cavalry.

The "Brigade."

The "Sappers."

The "Gunnners."

The "Sixtieth."

The Rifle Brigade.

The (?) Lancers, Hussars, or Dragoons.

The (?) Highlanders.

The Royal —.

The Blankshire.

The A.S.C.

comrades, and the older ones are merged with the younger sub-lieutenants. The same is true of every succeeding rank throughout the Fleet. The same thing is not true in the Army. In the Army the association may be described as vertical. There is immense solidarity in the Brigade of Guards, but there certainly is no such solidarity between officers of the Guards and officers of equal rank throughout the rest of the Army; and what is true of the Guards is true of almost every other branch and regiment of the Army. Generally speaking, it is true to say that each branch lives in a special world of its own.

That the two systems differ widely there can be no doubt. But because they differ, it does not follow that one is better than the other, or that either need be a bad one. It is hard, nevertheless, to reconcile the Army system with the requirements of modern warfare. The French, who till 1870, and indeed until after that date, retained a regimental system closely akin to our own, have made a great change. They have introduced the system of “ permutation ”¹ whereby an officer may be transferred for his own benefit, or that of the Service, from one regiment to another.

PROMOTION AND TRANSFER IN THE NAVY.

Reference has been made to the fact that it can be truly asserted of the British Cavalry and Infantry that “ the better the regiment, the worse the promotion.” This rule is subject to some qualification, but as a general proposition it is correct. It would be hard to imagine a more disastrous condition to impose upon a profession.

Let us, for one moment, compare the state of

¹ In practice the “ permutation ” is carried out within certain large sections of the army, *e.g.* the Infantry, the Artillery, the Dragoons, the Hussars, etc.

things in the Navy and in the Army respectively. A young lieutenant is serving as second in command in a small cruiser on the Yangtse. He greatly distinguishes himself. He navigates inland waters under circumstances of difficulty; he carries out some small enterprise with courage and judgment, and his conduct is reported to the Admiralty. He has a commander above him, probably every whit as good a man as himself. Under the Army system, he would have to wait till his senior officer died or was promoted, so that he could step into his shoes. In the Navy the process is quite different. The young officer is ordered by telegraph to return and report himself at the Admiralty. He does so, and is appointed to the command of a destroyer, or to some other post which he regards as a reward for his services. Or take a more important case: H.M.S. *Incompatible* has got the reputation of being a bad ship; the gunnery is below par; the stoke-hold crew is not what it should be; some of the gun-sights have been thrown overboard—evidently, there is something wrong. If H.M.S. *Incompatible* were a regiment, having got a bad name, she would keep it. It would be whispered about that the battalion was in a bad way, that one or two of the officers left a good deal to be desired, that the battalion had received a black mark from the inspecting officer. Officers and men would begin to look askance at a battalion which had got a bad name, and, before long, what was somewhat less than very good would easily become really bad.

In the Navy these things are impossible. The Admiralty would soon know that all was not right with the *Incompatible*. Some young officer who had shown exceptional merit and character would be ordered to attend at the Admiralty and would be told that, as a recognition of his service, he had been selected to go out as commander, or first lieutenant, of the defaulting ship; that he would

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start in a week, and that it was hoped in six months he would get the ship into order. He would regard the order as a compliment; he would go on the day named; he would undertake the duty, and probably succeed in the task imposed upon him. Meanwhile, the officer whom he replaced would return to England, would be placed in some smart ship under a competent captain, and in a few months would, very likely, get rid of all the disqualifications which made his withdrawal necessary.

THE PRACTICE IN THE ARMY.

The same practice does not prevail in the Army. If a captain were taken out of a regiment known for its excellence, and ordered to take command of a company in another battalion simply because that other battalion was going down the hill and the interests of the Service made a change necessary, there would be universal dissatisfaction in the battalion, which would soon find very audible expression. Transfers are, it is true, frequently made for the good of the Service, but with the consent of the officer only. If any attempt were made to transfer "by order," the whole feeling of the Service would condemn the action of the Army Council and would practically render such a change as that suggested impossible. It would be idle to blame the officers of the Army for objecting to a process which is absolutely alien to the whole custom and tradition of the Service. But it is impossible to contemplate dispassionately the state of things which has grown up, without coming to the conclusion that the naval system has great advantages, and without wishing that to a limited extent, at any rate, it might be extended to the Army.

As a matter of fact, the practice of transferring officers does exist in the higher ranks of the

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Army, and of recent years, both the commanding officer and second in command have been transferred on promotion from one regiment or one battalion to another. The process has, however, in some cases given rise to much heartburning, and will continue to do so until it becomes more common and more generally recognised as being necessary to the welfare of the Service as a whole.

It must not be supposed that any change in the direction indicated can be, or ought to be, made suddenly, still less that the practice of interchanging officers should become the rule instead of the exception; but there can be little doubt that, as long as the regiment and the battalions continue to be regarded as so many absolutely water-tight compartments between which there is, and can be no communication, the Army, as a whole, will suffer and a career will be closed to hundreds of young officers who love their profession, and desire nothing better than to devote their best abilities to it.¹

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XXXIII.

1. The British Army has grown and has not been made. It is not adapted to modern conditions. To adapt it to modern conditions, its organisation must be changed.

2. The Navy was in need of change, and has been changed.

3. The regimental system in the Army is an historical growth, not suited to modern conditions.

4. The system in the Navy differs widely from that which prevails in the Army, and is superior to it.

5. It is true to say of the Army that "the better the regiment, the worse the promotion."

It is not true to say of the Navy that "the better the ship, the worse the promotion."

6. It is essential that there should be a change in the Army system, but that change must be gradual.

¹ The value of "brevet" promotion in the Army, however, must not be overlooked.

CHAPTER XXXIV

“ESPRIT DE CORPS” AND REGIMENTAL TRADITION

“ESPRIT DE CORPS” AND “ESPRIT DE BATAILLON.”

PROBABLY the most formidable obstacle in the way of improvement in this all-important matter of interchangeability is the deep-rooted belief that the transfer of officers, if effected for purely Service reasons, is necessarily destructive of “esprit de corps” and regimental traditions. It is fortunate that this belief rests on no solid foundation, and that the evils apprehended are by no means the necessary, or even the probable consequence of a change of system. For undoubtedly “esprit de corps,” or what does duty for it in more than half the British Army, namely “esprit de bataillon,” is a most valuable force, valuable in all armies and in all ages, but perhaps especially valuable in our own voluntary Army at the present time. It is unnecessary to analyse or even to explain the peculiar influence which the traditions, the customs, the titles, the emblems of a particular association exercise over the men who compose it. The thing is as old as history, and as wide as the world. The “Tenth Legion,” the “Light Division,” the “Old Guard” are familiar examples of what “esprit de corps” means in war.

Every public school, and every house in every public school, every county cricket or football club,

every congregation, furnishes an example of the same power in the various associations in which men and women work and play, worship, study, or compete in peace.

All the philosophers in the world may preach against the absurdity of allowing the human intelligence to be moved by the magic of a name, the flutter of a flag, or the colour and cut of a garment, but they will preach in vain.

Names, symbols, and the distinctions of dress which serve as the outward signs of a common tradition and a common distinction, have the power to move men, and to stimulate their moral qualities in times of stress and danger.

Any one who seeks to better the British Army by adopting a scheme which ignores these sources of strength, or fails to take advantage of the power they confer, will fail, and will deserve to fail, in his task.

If the transfer of officers involved the sacrifice, or even the weakening of "esprit de corps," its adoption could only be viewed with suspicion and alarm.

But a little consideration will suffice to show that the principle and practice of transfer can safely be adopted, without the slightest fear of these untoward results following its adoption.

It is a fact which is indeed indisputable, but which, nevertheless, is not generally recognised, that "esprit de corps" attaches to the aggregation of individuals, and not to the individual. This may seem a somewhat cryptic saying, but its meaning and its truth can easily be made clear by one or two examples.

A NAVAL EXAMPLE.

On the 1st of June two battleships are lying at Portsmouth and Plymouth respectively. On that day they are commissioned; officers and crew are for

the most part strangers to the ships, and strangers to one another, until they meet on board. A fortnight later the two ships, forming part of the same fleet, are ordered by signal to compete in fleet exercises: to "man and arm ship," to "lay out anchors," to "row boats round the fleet."

In an instant both crews are on the alert; every man is doing his utmost; no one spares himself; the crew of the *Imperturbable's* cutter will die rather than let the *Royal George's* cutter get round before them, and the *Royal Georges* are prepared to return the compliment. Why? Because every man in either crew is animated by the "esprit de vaisseau"; he knows his ship to be the best in the fleet: he is determined that the rest of the fleet shall admit it. And yet the two ships have not been a month in commission.

AN EXAMPLE FROM THE ROYAL ARTILLERY.

But, it will be said, the Navy is a special Service with traditions of its own, and furnishes no safe guide in Army matters. Let us, then, turn to the Army. It is invidious to make comparisons, but no susceptibility can be hurt by a statement that the Royal Horse Artillery yields to no other branch of the Army in professional accomplishment, in skill at arms, or in gallantry in the field. But that while "esprit de bataillon," as it exists in the Infantry, is practically unknown in the Horse Artillery, there are nevertheless batteries with a name and fame of their own—batteries which, despite the fact that they wear the same pattern of clothes as their comrades in other batteries, are as proud and as conscious of their historical traditions as any battalion of infantry—is a fact which no soldier will deny.

The "Chestnut Battery"—to cite one distinguished unit among many—has a long, a peculiar,

and distinguished history, extending over more than a century, is well known. But the "Chestnut Battery" is not the less a peculiar and distinguished unit because its officers come and go, and its men enter it from other batteries and pass from it to other batteries.¹

A gunner in "A" battery to-day is proud, and justly proud, of his unit. To-morrow he may be transferred, for the good of the Service, to "Z" battery. The chances are ten to one that, if he be a good soldier, in a month's time he will have identified himself as completely with his new unit as he formerly did with his old one: will declare that it is the best mounted battery and the best shooting battery in the Service.

And the same lesson may be learnt from the Garrison Artillery, an arm which has its traditions and its divisions, preserved and cherished by those who serve in this important and efficient branch; but the existence of the "Battle-axe" Company does not paralyse the rest of the Garrison Artillery, or interfere with its great flexibility and power of adaptation to the needs of the Army.

"PERMUTATION" IN FOREIGN ARMIES.

And what is true of our own Navy and Army is true of the navies and armies of foreign countries. The testimony of French officers is emphatic in support of the contention that "permutation," within reasonable limits, has not injured the best regiments in the French Army, or diminished the prestige which they have inherited from a long and splendid military past.

It is necessary to bear these facts in mind. No reformer who ignores or underrates the value of

¹ Officers are frequently transferred not only from one Horse Artillery Battery to another, but from Field Artillery to Horse and *vice versa*.

"esprit de corps," as it exists and is understood in the British Army, has a chance of success. It is only those who understand and value this great law of cohesion who can undertake the task of modifying its effect so as to make it compatible with modern military progress. There is no need to despair. Already the principle of transferring officers on promotion is fully recognised, and frequently acted upon. The idea of transfers under other conditions is gradually making its way in all branches of the service, and not the least in those branches principally affected, namely, the Cavalry and Infantry.

The formation of a true General Staff, which dates from the year 1905, should make progress possible, if not easy; for it is a *sine quâ non* of the formation of such a Staff that officers should be readily transferred not merely from one unit to another, but, if need be, from one arm of the Service to another.¹

THE REGIMENT AS A CLUB.

Rapid progress must not be anticipated. Infantry battalions are at the present time regarded almost in the light of social clubs, and, following the analogy of such clubs, the equivalent of a heavy entrance fee and subscription is often demanded from the members. That this should be the case is, no doubt, to be regretted. It is not desirable that a young man should have to pay a large sum every year for the privilege of serving his country.²

¹ Officers who pass through the "École supérieure de la Guerre" in France, serve in succession in each arm. As announced by the Secretary of State for War recently, it is proposed to adopt a somewhat similar procedure in our own Army, and to attach officers to branches other than their own for purposes of instruction—a valuable step in advance.

² It is sometimes contended that by allowing regiments to become close corporations, and permitting, if not encouraging, the maintenance of a special and high rate of living in such regiments, the country obtains a very good class of officers who would not serve on any other terms. That the officers in such regiments are in many cases

But it is necessary to recognise facts, and military opinion, or at any rate the best military opinion, must sanction the change if it is to be effected without great loss to the Army.

The difficulties must not be underrated, but they are not insuperable.

THE QUESTION OF CLOTHES.

Among these difficulties we must not omit to mention the difficulty of "clothes," for, strange as it may seem, it is a real and a serious obstacle to progress. A lieutenant in the Navy, who is transferred for his own good or that of the Service, from a battleship in the Mediterranean to a destroyer in the Channel, assumes his duties in his new ship in the same clothes in which he performed them in his old one. But an officer transferred, let us say, from the 35th (Royal Sussex) to the 91st (Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders) has to abandon a wardrobe which has cost him some £60; and to purchase another which will cost him £120; not even his sword will be available.¹

But difficulties exist to be overcome, and doubtless this obstacle may in time become less formidable. It will not be got over, however, by making

exceedingly good is beyond dispute, though it cannot be said that they are observably better than their comrades in other less expensive and less exclusive corps. It is by no means to be assumed that if the scale of expenditure were to be reduced, or if the exclusive character of the regiments were to be modified, the Service would really lose the excellent type of officer it now in many cases obtains. But even if this price had to be paid, it would be worth paying if, as a consequence, the number of young men, without wealth, but with intelligence, energy, and ambition who entered the Army as officers were to be greatly increased. To obtain men of this type in large numbers a career must be open, and the Army must be made a "profession," as well as an occupation and a pastime.

¹ In the French Army permutation takes place within large sections of the Army to which the same uniform is common. Thus, an officer transferred from one regiment of Dragoons to another retains his uniform and facings, only the regimental number being changed.

light of uniform distinctions. In a voluntary army uniform distinctions are a natural growth, and must be maintained. That the multiplication of uniform badges and distinctions has been carried to an extreme limit in our Army few would be found to deny, and every step in the direction of simplification is a step in the right direction. But absolute uniformity is quite unattainable, and, in fact, is not desirable. In this, as in other cases where habit and tradition are concerned, progress must be slow ; it is the direction of the advance and not the speed which is most important.

“FESTINA LENTE.”

But enough has been said to illustrate the nature and the difficulty of the problem with which those responsible for the administration and welfare of the Army are called upon to deal.

The Army, if it is to serve the nation effectively under modern conditions, must become a profession, and must offer a career.

In order that young men of spirit and intelligence entering the Army may feel that, if they make soldiering their profession, a professional reward will await them, the career must be open to talent and energy wherever found. The horizon of an active and intelligent officer must not be absolutely bounded by the regiment. On the other hand, any policy which involves breaking up existing units, and destroying existing traditions, must stand condemned. Regimental promotion and the regimental connection must be the rule, and transfer the exception. But the rule must never kill the exception ; and no system will ever be truly satisfactory under which it is possible to say, as can with too much truth be said now, “the better the regiment, the worse the promotion.”

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XXXIV.

1. "Esprit de corps" and "esprit de bataillon" are not identical, nor does the one necessarily exclude the other.
2. "Esprit de corps" is of immense value in a fighting force.
3. In the Navy, devotion to the "Ship" is compatible with devotion to "The Service."
4. The Royal Artillery furnishes an example of "esprit de corps" combined with pride in the special unit.
5. The practice of "permutation" prevails in foreign armies without injury to regimental feeling and tradition.
6. The development of the "General Staff" should tend to modify the existing regimental system to the advantage of the Service.
7. The practice of regarding the regiment solely as a club does not conduce to the best interests of the Service.
8. The question of "uniform" creates a special difficulty in the British Army, but the difficulty is not insuperable.
9. No modification of the existing regimental system can be wisely undertaken without the support of a strong body of military opinion. This opinion will be forthcoming if changes are made with judgment and consideration.

CHAPTER XXXV

COMPULSORY SERVICE

THE ADVOCATES OF COMPULSORY SERVICE.

A VERY large number of convinced and patriotic persons are of opinion that compulsory service, in some form, is necessary to ensure the safety of the Empire. The word "Conscription" is not popular, and other phrases such as "Universal Service," "National Military Training," and so on, are often used to express very much the same thing.

It is not necessary to be too precise over the definition, but, generally speaking, what is meant is universal liability to serve the nation in arms in time of war.

The ideal is in all respects a laudable and honourable one. The primary duty of every citizen is to defend his country in time of need. The ideal of national duty is too little cultivated by the people of the United Kingdom, and there can be no doubt that a nation which loses this ideal is in great and, indeed, in deserved danger.

It is impossible to sympathise with those who attack and deride the advocates of compulsory service on the ground that they are creating a military spirit, or are imposing a burden upon individuals which they dislike and object to. As long as the country is threatened by the fleets and armies of other nations, it is an exceedingly good thing that a military spirit should be encouraged

The fact that individuals object to do their part in promoting a great national cause, and object to obey a law which would be made for the benefit and protection of all, furnishes no reason for admiring the objectors or surrendering to their objections.

Nothing but respect is due to those who, in the honest belief that the country is in danger and that compulsory service alone will save it, urge the adoption of conscription or its equivalent upon their fellow-countrymen. They deserve all honour for their patriotism and their courage. If it were true that the country could only be saved by the adoption of compulsory service, if even it could be shown that the country was in great peril and that compulsory service would enable us to surmount that peril, no word of criticism of the proposal to adopt such a system would be found in these pages. It is because, in the opinion of the writer, compulsory service is not necessary in order to make the country safe, because he holds strongly to the opinion that compulsory service might be adopted and the country might, nevertheless, be in great jeopardy, that he is not an adherent of the policy of conscription under any guise.

THE OBJECT OF CONSCRIPTION.

The object of conscription in every foreign country is to obtain by compulsion of law the services of the entire manhood of the nation, in time of war, for the defence of the national soil. Such is the primary object, and the sacred duty of defending hearth and home furnishes the justification for the great demand which is made on every grown man. It is true that defensive war may be best conducted by means of offensive action, and that a frontier can often be best defended on the enemy's side. For this reason the Germans crossed

the frontier in 1870. But, by practically universal consent, the duty which the Army of this country is likely to be called upon to perform is to fight an enemy across the sea, and possibly at a great distance from home. It will be said that other nations maintain their conscript armies for the same purpose. It is true that in the past they have done so, but with what result? France sent a mobilised army corps of conscripts to fight in Madagascar, and the fearful mortality which destroyed the troops furnished an object-lesson that France has never forgotten, and which other nations have not been slow to learn. Italy sent her conscripts into Erythrea, and the Italian army was destroyed at the battle of Adowa. France has abandoned, and Germany has never adopted, the policy of utilising her conscript army for distant expeditions in tropical and sub-tropical climates.

There is no sign whatever that the conclusion which experience has compelled the great military nations of Europe to adopt, is likely to be rejected by the people of the United Kingdom. There is, indeed, much evidence in a contrary direction. Parliament, supported, it cannot be doubted, by public opinion, has deliberately confined three-fourths of our troops to service within the limits of the United Kingdom, both in peace and war. It is true that the Militia is usually invited to volunteer for foreign service, and that during the South African War members of the Volunteer Force were also asked to serve, not in their units, but as individuals. But neither of these circumstances strengthens the belief that the public is at present prepared to enforce by law the obligation of foreign service, and, it may be, of tropical service, on every man of fighting age in the country.

But if the statutory army is not to be available for foreign service, the question inevitably arises whether it is or can be wanted for home defence.

If it is so required, then, clearly, the whole theory of our naval and military preparation is wrong. The country has been told over and over again that our naval and military policy is based on an hypothesis totally inconsistent with the retention of an immense army in the United Kingdom. The hypothesis was clearly stated by Mr. Balfour when, speaking as Prime Minister and Chairman of the Committee of Imperial Defence, he said :

We have endeavoured to picture to ourselves a clear issue which is very unfavourable to this country, and have shown, at least to our satisfaction, that on that hypothesis, unfavourable as it is, serious invasion of these Islands is not an eventuality which we need seriously consider.

The view expressed by Mr. Balfour has been accepted by the Administration of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. It will, indeed, be impossible to suppose that any other view was entertained by those responsible for the safety of the Empire. If an invasion in force, an invasion such as that of which France became the victim in 1870, were really contemplated, then, indeed, not only would conscription be reasonable and necessary, but it would be incumbent upon the Government not to lose a day in revolutionising our existing military arrangements. The idea of resisting the attack of an organised army of a million trained troops with the forces we at present possess, organised as they are now organised, is grotesque. Clearly we do not require a great conscript army for the only purpose for which such an army can be used.

COMPULSORY SERVICE AS A MEANS OF PHYSICAL TRAINING.

As a military precaution, compulsory universal service is not necessary ; but it is fair to its advocates to admit that, by many of them, compulsion is not recommended on purely military grounds.

Many of the advocates of universal service declare that discipline and training are in themselves excellent things ; that drill and rifle-shooting are capable of taking the place of gymnastics and other forms of exercise ; and that by enforcing some sort of military training upon the youth and manhood of this country, we shall contrive a double debt to pay ; shall create, on the one hand, the material from which a fighting army may be formed, and, on the other hand, shall develop the character and strengthen the muscles of thousands of young men who pass under the hands of the drill sergeant.

This argument is entitled to receive most respectful consideration. Common knowledge, and the reports of various Commissions and Committees afford melancholy evidence of the physical degeneration of great masses of our population ; and a perusal of the writings and speeches of those who claim to be teachers of the people and guides of public opinion, makes it abundantly evident that the idea of personal sacrifice for national objects is by no means a generally accepted or approved doctrine.

But the argument, though entitled to attention, is not entitled to prevail. If gymnastics and physical training are required, they can be far better secured as they have been in France, in Germany, and in Sweden, by organised athletic exercises. To go through a campaign, on campaign diet and under campaigning conditions, is no doubt a fine physical tonic, and those who survive the ordeal will probably issue from it in better health and condition than when they left their homes. It is even possible that a system of conscription which imposed upon large sections of the population the rigours of Prussian military discipline, and the arduous labour of the German Manœuvres might beneficially affect the physique of our people. But to pretend that the kind of training which is

advocated by those who are the most zealous advocates of universal service in this country, involves an amount of physical exercise sufficient to modify the character of a nation, is a phantasy. One of the most capable and convinced advocates of compulsory service is of opinion that the training must be adapted to suit the convenience of the men; and that even the week's camp which the Volunteers now attend is excessive.

Clearly, if this slender modicum of physical exercise be worth paying for, the price paid should be very small. But even this advantage cannot be bought cheaply, as some would have us believe. In the great military countries of the world the Conscript Army is the Army, and, practically speaking, there is no other. In this country the Conscript Army, or the Compulsory-Service Army, or whatever else the statutory force may be called, must necessarily be an additional army. The Regular Army with its Artillery, its Cavalry, its subsidiary services, its barracks, its transports, its pension list, must be maintained and must be paid for. When the money necessary for this purpose has been found and expended, more money must immediately be found to pay for the other army which is of no use in peace, and may be of no use in war.

THE COST OF COMPULSORY SERVICE.

Some persons apparently hold that this army will be cheap—though anything which is superfluous is necessarily dear,—but this is an error. In Appendix VIII. will be found a statement of the actual cost of a compulsory-service army based upon most moderate assumptions as to what will be required. In that calculation it is assumed that the new army will take the place of both the Militia and the Volunteers, and that the whole of the sums, amounting to nearly £4,000,000, now spent

on those branches of the Service will be credited to the substituted force. On the other hand, a year's service is assumed, and pay at the rate of 1s. a day is estimated for. These figures may be modified to suit any plan in which unpaid service and a very short period of training are included. But whatever the modifications may be, the principal figures of the account will remain, provided always that the army proposed is to be regarded as a serious one, and as intended to take part in war. Any army which is going to take part in war with a chance of success must have Artillery, Cavalry, arms, ammunition, equipment; and, what is perhaps even more important, it must have trained officers and instructors; it must have ranges, manœuvring grounds, and drill grounds. All these things must be paid for. Is the game worth the candle? As a means of providing gymnastic exercises and open-air education for a portion of our town population, it certainly is not.

But if such an army is to be more than an amusement, no half-measures will suffice. It will be necessary to take matters seriously, to enforce discipline, to punish disobedience, to make the work of training arduous and unremitting; every man, willing and unwilling, must be put through the mill. Will the country pay this price? If it believes that the sacrifice is necessary, that there is a real danger to be guarded against, it will doubtless pay the price, heavy as it is,—but not otherwise.

It will be said that other nations submit to compulsory service, and are all the better for doing so. No one who knows what conscription has done for Germany as a whole, and for Prussia in particular, will deny that universal service has conferred upon the German people many benefits in addition to the great gift of victory in four campaigns. But here again the price paid has

been a heavy one. If there have been benefits there have been evils, and great evils. Militarism, the creation of a special caste of officers outside and superior to the law, the unpleasant and sometimes brutal life in the barracks. These are among the evils. Prussia has had its "Offizier Corps" for more than a century. It has learnt to tolerate the institution, and has in consequence enjoyed such benefits as the existence of this class of privileged specialist can confer. But in this country we have no such class, and we should never allow it to be created. But "go-as-you-please" officers are of little value, and are of least value where large numbers of soldiers of all classes, compelled by law to serve, are subjected to the restraints of discipline.

CONSCRIPTION A DYING CAUSE.

There is, moreover, another important objection which occurs to those who know what conscription is, and what are the evils—evils which equal, if they do not outweigh, its advantages. Is conscription so firmly established in the affections of those nations which suffer from, or enjoy, it, that we are wise in submitting ourselves to its heavy pressure? There is evidence, which cannot be overlooked, to the effect that conscription is rather a dying than a growing cause; and if that be so, it would be a calamity if we were to identify ourselves with a failing and discredited faith.

MILITARY OPINION AND CONSCRIPTION.

One other very important consideration, with respect to the proposal to establish compulsory and universal service in this country, must be dealt with. It is probable that the great majority of soldiers are strongly in favour of compulsory service;

many of them believe that without it an adequate army cannot be raised and maintained, and others hold that conscription, or something like it, would remove many of the difficulties with which they find themselves confronted under the voluntary system.

It would be unreasonable to criticise or cavil at an opinion which is natural, and which is entertained for the most excellent reasons. But the wisdom of the particular action, which some soldiers consider it permissible to take in order to attain their ideal, is certainly open to question. The military view as to the danger of insufficient training, and the folly of relying upon badly officered and undisciplined troops, is substantially the same as that which has found expression in these pages. Of that fact there is abundance of documentary evidence. It is strange, therefore, to find any soldiers consenting to and even supporting projects of which the necessary result must be the creation of large hordes of untrained and ill-officered levies—troops as unlike those which compose the armies of the great Military Powers as it is possible to imagine. The secret of this strange acquiescence, however, is not far to seek. There are undoubtedly soldiers who are confident that the projects which have been referred to are inevitably destined to failure; that the inadequacy of the plan will be so obvious that the nation, weary and disappointed, will at length resign itself to the acceptance of real compulsory service under the only conditions which can make it effective.

It is permissible to suggest that those who take this view—and they exist—those who are prepared to accept a solution, not because they believe in its success, but because they hope to gain what they want out of its inevitable breakdown, are playing a dangerous game.

There is no sign whatever that the country is in

favour of compulsory service in any such shapes as will lead to the creation of a real army. The breakdown of any of the half-and-half proposals that have been made in this direction is probable enough, but that the breakdown will bring about a final and satisfactory solution of the military problem there is no reason whatever to believe.

To sacrifice the substance for the shadow is a very dangerous and unwise proceeding; and the Army will, in the long run, owe little thanks to those who hope, like Medea, to effect its cure by boiling it in a cauldron of confusion and dissolution in the hope that it may emerge rejuvenated from the ordeal.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XXXV.

1. There are many advocates of Compulsory Service, Universal Training, or Conscription in the country.
2. The idea which animates the advocates of compulsory service—namely, the duty of the individual to take a share of the national burdens—is sound and deserving of admiration.
3. If compulsory service is necessary for the safety of the country, it should be adopted.
4. Compulsory service is not necessary for the safety of the country.
5. No nation has adopted compulsory service for the prosecution of war in distant countries. The nations which have attempted to do so had reason to regret the experiment.
6. A compulsory-service army which is not available for foreign service, is not required by this country.
7. Compulsory service cannot with advantage be adopted solely as a means for providing physical exercises.
8. Compulsory service must involve great additional cost.
9. Soldiers who are prepared to sacrifice the Regular Army in the hope that conscription may be the result are sacrificing the substance for a shadow.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE COMMITTEE OF IMPERIAL DEFENCE AND THE GENERAL STAFF: PART I

THE following quotation is from a memorandum drawn up by the author in October, 1902. It has been made to serve as an introduction to the present chapter because it furnishes an accurate summary of the argument which it is desired to enforce. The memorandum contained a series of examples drawn from the recent naval and military history of the country, and intended to illustrate the propositions advanced. The concluding portion of the document embodied the writer's view as to the true constitution and function of the permanent consultative body he desired to see established, together with detailed suggestions as to the means by which such a body might be created.

A MEMORANDUM ON THE NEED FOR ORGANISATION FOR WAR.

THE NEED FOR ORGANISATION.

1. *A more complete Organisation for War needed.*—It is submitted That there is a need for more complete organisation for war throughout the Empire than at present exists.

2. *A Special Body necessary.*—That for the purpose of creating and maintaining such improved system of organisation, it is necessary to create a special body, whose duties

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shall be different from, and additional to, those now assigned to the Intelligence Department of the two Services.

3. *Two methods of proof.*—That the need for such organisation exists may be demonstrated by two classes of argument, the one *a priori*, the other based upon specific instances of cases in which injury has resulted, or may be expected to result, to the Empire from the absence of such organisation.

4. *The a priori argument.*—It is reasonable to assume that a new and improved form of organisation is required on the following grounds, among others :

5. *The Problem of Defence a complex one.*—The problem of the defence of the Empire as a whole, and the effective, scientific, and economical utilisation of its resources in time of war, is an exceedingly difficult and complex one. It is a problem far more difficult and complicated than that which is presented by any other nation.

6. *Therefore it requires special and scientific study.*—It is reasonable to suppose that the many complex questions which arise can only be dealt with by persons who have made a special and scientific study of the facts of the situation and of the principles which ought to govern the Administration in dealing with those facts.

7. *Other countries find bodies of experts necessary.*—The existence in other countries of bodies of experts specially trained to consider and report upon questions affecting the naval and military problems confronting those countries, furnishes some evidence that this country cannot safely dispense with an equally well-trained body of men.

THE INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENTS OF THE SERVICES.

8. *The Naval and Military Departments do not meet the want.*—It may be contended that the Intelligence Departments of the two Services already supply all that is needed, and that if they are not now adequate they can be made so by mere addition to the staff of the respective Departments. It is possible that this may prove to be the case, but there seem strong reasons, to which reference will be made at a later stage, for believing that no mere extension of the Naval and Military Intelligence Departments will provide all that the situation demands. Moreover, it can be proved to demonstration that these Departments do not at present, and under existing conditions, do all that the country has a right to require.

9. *Staff of these Departments criticised.*—And here it is

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relevant to point out that not only do the Intelligence Departments in the two Services compare unfavourably in point of numbers with the corresponding institutions in Germany, but that there is no reasonable or logical proportion between the establishments of the British Naval and Military Departments respectively.

10. The Intelligence Departments of the British Navy and Army respectively are compared as follows :

British N.I.D. :

- 1 D.N.I. (Rear-Admiral) (salary £1,500).
- 4 Assistant D.N.I.'s (Captains, R.N.).
- 6 Commanders.
- 1 Fleet Paymaster (for special duties).
- 6 Marine Officers.

Total 18

British M.I.D. :

- 1 D.G.M.I. (salary £2,100).
- 3 A.Q.M.G.'s (one temporary).
- 8 D.A.Q.M.G.'s (ditto).
- 8 Staff Captains (ditto).

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- Also :
- 1 A.Q.M.G. (for Mobilising duties).
 - 1 D.A.Q.M.G. (ditto).
 - 1 Staff Captain (ditto)

Total 23

11. *Compared with German M.I.D. and N.I.D.*—The Intelligence Department of the German Army comprises no less than 250 officers. . . .

12. *Conclusions.*—It will be seen from these figures that not only are the British establishments inferior in point of numbers to those of Germany, but that in this country the relative importance of the two Services is in no way reflected in the apportionment of the Intellectual equipment assigned to them. That the Intelligence Department of the British Navy should be manifestly inferior in regard to the number of its personnel to the Intelligence Department of the British Army is an anomaly which cannot be satisfactorily explained.

13. *Argument from the German General Staff.*—The existence of the German General Staff is, it is submitted, a strong *a priori* argument in favour of the creation in this country of

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a body with functions analogous to, though not necessarily identical with, those of the General Staff.

14. *Special training of German officers.*—The problem of defending Germany against attack, and of utilising the resources of the German Empire with the greatest advantage in time of war, is a complicated and difficult one. In order to provide for its due performance, a large number of German officers are elaborately educated from their early youth upwards. A highly intricate scientific question is studied in a scientific manner by specialists who devote a trained intelligence to its examination.

15. *Our Problem of Defence far more complicated than that of Germany.*—But the problem of defending Germany, and of utilising the resources of the German Empire to the best advantage in time of war, sinks into insignificance compared with the far greater and more elaborate problem presented by the needs and circumstances of the British Empire. And yet it is no exaggeration to say that the continuous and scientific study of the problem as a whole is “nobody’s business”; and that no body of British officers receives a training to be compared with that which is made obligatory for all officers serving on the German General Staff.

16. *Higher organisation therefore needed.*—It seems reasonable to infer that the more complicated problem requires the higher organisation to deal with it, and that we cannot safely dispense with that which Germany has found to be essential.

17. *Exact imitation of German system not necessary.*—It is not, of course, suggested that, because German conditions have produced the German General Staff, British conditions, which are quite different from German ones, need necessarily produce an identical organisation.

THE COMMITTEE OF THE CABINET ON DEFENCE.

18. *Cabinet Defence Committee: its value.*—It would be unreasonable, when proposing the formation of a new body, to omit all mention of the existing Council of Defence. It is not, however, necessary to say much about this Council. The value in a Constitutional country of a link between the Naval and Military Departments and the Executive Authority vested in the Prime Minister and the Cabinet is generally recognised. The Committee of the Cabinet on Defence doubtless has its value as furnishing such a link.

19. *Its shortcomings.*—But that the Committee is really capable of supervising or directing the defence of the Empire can scarcely be seriously contended.

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Members are not specialists.—None of the Members of the Committee are specialists, and all of them, being occupied in very important matters of State, are prevented from giving more than a very small portion of their time and attention to the important subjects upon which, it is presumed, they advise the Cabinet as a whole.

20. *No Minutes kept, therefore no continuity of policy possible.*—Apart from all these questions, there is one feature in the proceedings of the Defence Committee of the Cabinet which renders it absolutely impossible that it should perform with advantage the duty of an advisory Council on questions of defence. As has been frequently stated by the Prime Minister, the Committee keeps no minutes. But the keeping of minutes is absolutely essential if continuity of policy is to be preserved and if a body of accepted doctrine is to be created.

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21. *No recognised authority on Naval or Military questions: Contrast with Germany.*—It is one of the most remarkable proofs of the inadequacy of our present arrangements that there is no accepted view with regard to any great question concerning the Naval and Military Services, and that no man or body of men speaks on naval or military subjects with an authority which commands general respect. It is not the least remarkable that this should be the case. If in Germany the *Stettiner Zeitung* were to enunciate one theory with regard to the distribution of the German Army and the German General Staff were to express another and contradictory opinion, no reasonable German would pay the slightest attention to the newspaper, or would entertain the least doubt as to which view were the correct one.

22. *An illustration from the scientific world.*—Even in this country an opinion on the liquefaction of gases expressed by Lord Rayleigh or Professor Dewar would carry more weight with the general public than a contrary opinion expressed by the *Keighley Echo* or the *Brixton Journal*. But in both the above cases public opinion would accept the official as against the non-official opinion, because all the world would know that in either case such an opinion was the outcome of close application, of long study, and of scientific methods.

23. *The "official" view in Naval and Military questions not accepted: Reasons.*—With regard to naval and military subjects in this country, however, no such presumption exists. It is no exaggeration to say that in a conflict of opinion

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between a newspaper or other critic on the one hand, and the official exponent of the Naval or Military Departments on the other, the public very rarely give the benefit of any presumption to the official view. Very often, no doubt, the public are wrong, but their instinct is a correct one, and is due to the fact that they have come to regard expressions of opinion on naval and military questions as merely individual views, formed without reference to any particular study, and often destined to be contradicted the next day by another professional authority equally eminent in the Service and equally unqualified to come forward as a scientific and informed exponent of any body of doctrine.

THE ABSENCE OF A SOUND PROFESSIONAL OPINION ON NAVAL AND MILITARY QUESTIONS.

24. *Ministers often misled by "experts."*—It would be unreasonable to blame the public for their want of belief, for undoubtedly the attitude is common to the political heads of great parties. Nothing is more common than to hear Ministers speak with indignation and annoyance of the errors into which they have been led by accepting the advice of naval and military officers whom it has been customary to style "experts." In nine cases out of ten the Minister has actually been misled, and has real ground for complaint; but to conclude from this fact that there is no science of war and the preparation for war, and that that science cannot be more clearly expounded by those who have studied it than by the first man in the street, is a great mistake.

25. *A good officer not necessarily an expert in Defence questions.*—The fact is that a man does not become an expert in military matters because he wears a red coat, or in naval matters because he wears a blue one. If he has attained distinction in either Service it is probable that he is an expert in some particular department of his profession. He may be a good flag officer, a good gunner, a good disciplinarian, a good frontier leader, or merely a brave and active-minded man; but he may be all or any of these things without necessarily being an expert in the great science of war, or acquainted with the methods by which, under the complicated conditions of our Empire, preparation for war can most effectively be made. Ministers constantly depend upon the opinion of professional men in respect to subjects of which their advisers have no expert knowledge whatever. It is no wonder, then, that disappointments are frequent.

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26. *Conclusion : The need for true experts.*—It is submitted that under these circumstances it is greatly to be desired that the country should be furnished with a body of men who are, or who may in time become, true experts, and that facilities may be given for the creation and growth of a body of opinion with regard to military questions which will command respect because it is the outcome of scientific method and research.

THE RECONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE OF DEFENCE.

In the spring of the year 1903, the Committee of Defence was reconstituted by the Prime Minister (The Right Hon. A. J. Balfour) and important alterations made in its composition and functions. The Committee was no longer confined to members of the Cabinet, but was extended to include not only the First Sea Lord and the Director of Naval Intelligence on behalf of the Navy, and the Chief of the General Staff and the head of the Intelligence Branch on behalf of the Army, but other individuals who were from time to time summoned to attend the Committee for special purposes. Thus the composition of the Committee at its ordinary meetings was as follows:—The Prime Minister, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Secretary of State for War, the First Sea Lord, the Chief of the General Staff of the Army, and the Directors of the Intelligence Departments of the Navy and Army respectively. To these, who may be regarded as the ordinary members of the Committee, others were added from time to time when the subjects under discussion made their presence essential or desirable. Thus the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Secretary of State for India, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer were frequent though not regular attendants. Important permanent officials were occasionally called into council, and a valuable precedent was set by the extension of an invitation

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to a Canadian Minister to attend on an occasion when the defence of the Dominion formed the subject of deliberation.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE COMMITTEE OF DEFENCE.

It must be clearly understood, however, that, while the attendance at the meetings of the Committee was of the character described, the Committee of Imperial Defence, as originally constituted, had no regular members, *ex officio* or otherwise. It was throughout the view of the Prime Minister that he was, and must of necessity be, the sole permanent nucleus of the Committee, and that it was within his province to summon to any given meeting any person or persons whom he considered qualified to assist him in preparing a policy to lay before the Cabinet. That the heads of the Naval and Military Departments, with their advisers, should as a rule come within this category was natural, but the Prime Minister was always careful to maintain his right both of exclusion and inclusion untrammelled by any rule or precedent.

It was in the exercise of this discretion that at the close of the year 1905, on the eve of laying down the seals of office, he caused an invitation to be sent to an eminent but unofficial civilian to attend the Committee, an invitation which it appears has been renewed prior to every subsequent meeting of that body. It is assumed that such has been the course pursued or else that the basis upon which the Committee was reconstituted has been altered, and that the principle of permanent membership on appointment by the Prime Minister has now been adopted.

THE VALUE OF THE COMMITTEE.

There can be no doubt at all that the Committee of Defence as reconstituted is an immense improve-

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ment upon the original body of that name. Its existence in its present form is in itself an evidence that the need for a scientific review of our naval and military problems is recognised. The regular consultation which has been established between the directors of the policy of the nation on the one hand and the chiefs of the two military services on the other, proves that the intimate connection between policy and armaments has been at length recognised. The frequency with which meetings have been held and the constant attendance of the Prime Minister, testify to the importance which is now attached to the deliberations of the Committee. The practice of recording the conclusions of each meeting in printed minutes is in itself a notable advance, and is the first step towards the creation of a consistent and national tradition regulating our naval and military policy.

Lastly, the appointment of a paid secretary, and the selection for the post of a man of high distinction and wide experience, may be taken as signs that the value of continuity in the proceedings of such a body as the Committee of Defence has at length been recognised, even though the steps taken to ensure such continuity have hitherto been tentative and inadequate. It is difficult to exaggerate the value of the work that has been done by the Committee of Defence since its reconstitution. Much of that work has been of a most important character. In a certain sense this cannot be regarded as altogether a matter of congratulation. The very magnitude of the tasks which the Committee has found awaiting it is a measure of past neglect. That the scientific consideration of some of the most important problems of Imperial Defence should have to be undertaken *ab initio* at the present time is a fact calculated to give rise to very serious reflections. Nor must it be supposed that because a certain amount of attention is now

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being given to these problems, past errors have as yet been compensated for, or the evils due to past neglect been removed. It is absolutely essential to remember that it is not in the power of a nation to abridge to any considerable extent the period which must be devoted to the scientific preparation for war. Quite apart from material preparation, knowledge and experience are required ; and knowledge and experience are plants of slow growth. It takes far longer to train a mind than to make a gun.

THE DEFECTS OF THE COMMITTEE.

While, however, much has been accomplished for which the nation is largely indebted to the unflagging interest and personal exertions of Mr. Balfour, much remains to be done. It would be a great mistake to imagine that the Committee of Imperial Defence has done its work, or even that time alone is required to enable it to perfect that which it has already begun. There are still patent defects in the constitution of the Committee itself which must be remedied if it is to accomplish all that the nation has a right to hope and expect from it.

THE AMATEUR ELEMENT—POLITICAL.

In the first place the Committee of Defence is, and under its present constitution must continue to be, a body of "amateurs." This may seem a somewhat extreme statement, when made with regard to a Committee which numbers among its ordinary members four professional authorities occupying high and responsible posts in the great combatant Services.

But the statement can nevertheless be sustained. That the political members of the Committee should be "amateurs" with respect to much of the work

transacted, is, of course, inevitable under our existing constitutional arrangements. Ministers are necessarily chosen from the not ineligible section of the preponderant political party in Parliament, and are rarely returned to the House of Commons on account of their special fitness for administration, and still more rarely for their fitness to perform the special duties connected with the office to which they are ultimately assigned on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. If, however, it be clearly understood that the function of a political Minister, when taking part in the deliberations of the Committee of Defence, is, or ought to be, mainly political, and rarely, and in a very slight degree, military, it will become apparent that the "amateur" element need not necessarily characterise the work of the political members. A politician, who confines himself to contributing his political experience to the solution of a problem partly political and partly military, speaks as a professional, and only becomes an "amateur" when he assumes to be an authority upon purely military questions.

THE AMATEUR ELEMENT—NAVAL AND MILITARY.

It is, however, rather on the non-political side that the "amateur" element is most likely to be found. This apparently paradoxical statement is explained, as soon as we enquire what is the actual contribution which the naval and military members are asked to make, and what are their probable qualifications for rendering the service demanded of them.

How best to utilise the resources of the British Empire for the defence of the Empire is a vast and complicated problem. It is common knowledge that the incomparably simpler problem of the defence of Germany has for generations past furnished adequate material for a life-long study on the part of hundreds of the most intelligent

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thinkers in the Fatherland. The men who undertake this study are carefully selected, and, having been selected, are given every opportunity of pursuing their work under the most favourable conditions. The idea that high command in the army or navy, or even distinguished service in the field, can, apart from other experience, qualify an officer to express an opinion upon the general problem of defence and organisation for war would be scouted, and justly scouted, as illogical and inconsistent with scientific method. There is not the slightest reason why a successful general, a victorious admiral, or a man of conspicuous valour should not also be a profound student of the innumerable factors which go to make up the great problem of Imperial Defence. But on the other hand, there is no reason whatever why he should be. It is eminently desirable that a naval or military member of the Committee of Defence should have had experience in war or in the command of fleets or armies: he will never furnish the full contribution of which a military mind is capable, unless he possesses this experience. But he can possess it, and at the same time be almost entirely useless as a member of the Committee of Defence. He must have something more, and that something must be the outcome of long, patient, and exhaustive study, in a great school, and, if possible, under a great teacher. No man can command the great teacher. But it is possible by patience, and by the exercise of the same common sense which we apply in other professions, to create the great school. In time a scholar will stand head and shoulders above his fellows, and will become the teacher we require. But we must begin, and must be content to wait. We have not begun yet. And thus it is that we are confronted by the danger of having to summon to the Committee of Defence sailors and soldiers

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who are chosen by virtue of their office, and not because, among all the soldiers and sailors who hold the King's commission, they are best qualified to tell the political administrators of the Empire what is the true judgment of military science with respect to the great problems upon which they are asked to advise. Until the professional element upon the Committee of Defence can be relied upon to give expression to a truly scientific and considered opinion upon all problems submitted to it, the Committee will remain incomplete and inadequate for its purpose.

THE ABSENCE OF CONTINUITY AMONG THE POLITICAL MEMBERS.

Again, it is of the highest importance that there should be an element of continuity in the work of the Committee. As far as the political members are concerned, it is idle to hope for a change in conditions which are the inevitable outcome of our party system. It would be outside the province of this work to discuss the advantages which the nation derives, or is supposed to derive, from the party system. That the existence of the system has always been, and probably always will be, most detrimental to the Army and Navy, considered as fighting machines, is beyond dispute. But it is sufficient for the present purpose to accept the conventional view that this disadvantage is more than compensated by the great benefits which the operation of the system confers upon the nation in other respects. It is, however, manifestly inconvenient that at least half the personnel of an important body engaged in permanent work should be liable to dismissal at any moment for reasons wholly unconnected with that work. Moreover, so important is the position of the Prime Minister on the Committee of Defence that its value must

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necessarily be affected by the idiosyncrasy of the individual who presides over its deliberations. We need not go far into our past history to find examples of Ministers to whom the work of the Committee would have been tedious and uncongenial, and statesmen of similar bent of mind may again occupy the position of Premier. The work of a body whose chief is indifferent or unsympathetic cannot prosper

THE ABSENCE OF CONTINUITY AMONG THE PROFESSIONAL MEMBERS.

But the want of continuity among the professional members is a serious defect in the organisation of the Committee which need not remain without a remedy. It is true that the personnel of the Board of Admiralty and of the Army Council, respectively, does not necessarily, or indeed usually, change with a change of Government. But the salutary rules which regulate the duration of commands indirectly affect the term of service of the naval and military members of the Committee, and three or four years is probably the average term of membership of any individual. When it is remembered that during a period of a hundred years the Prussian General Staff was presided over by three chiefs only, it will be recognised that the span allotted to our own naval and military advisers in which to accumulate and utilise their experience, is very short. That, if the naval and military members of the Committee are to begin their specialised career when they enter the Committee, and to finish it when they leave the Committee, the time is far too short is beyond doubt. There is, however, much to be said for the view that, on such a body as the Committee of Defence, in which the fluctuating factors of politics are continually modifying the military situation, there

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should be frequent additions of new blood, and that no idea, however excellent, should be allowed to become stereotyped, or accepted as good for all time. But if this view is to prevail, it is all the more important that the officers who are from time to time summoned to the Committee should be in a position to regard the years spent at the Council table as merely an interlude in a course of cognate professional study. They must be drawn from and must return to a great school of military thought and teaching in which they have been in turn students and professors.

Unless continuity of tradition and uniformity of standard are secured by these means, the constant changes in the composition of the Committee of Defence which the present system renders inevitable, must be detrimental to efficiency, and must tend to produce spasmodic action and violent reversals of policy.

THE SECRETARY OF THE COMMITTEE.

It may be said that the principle of continuity is recognised in the appointment of a permanent, or quasi-permanent Secretary. But such is far from being the case. The Secretary of the Committee of Defence, however able, ought to exercise a purely ministerial function. It is his duty to record the minutes, to arrange the business subject to instructions, to act the part of "Remembrancer" to the Committee, and to make them aware of what has taken place at previous meetings. It is in no sense the duty of the Secretary to formulate, to express, or even to influence policy.

THE ABSENCE OF A TRUE PROFESSIONAL ELEMENT.

It will be seen, therefore, that, while in the opinion of the author the Committee of Defence as now constituted is a body of great importance,

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which has done, and is capable of doing, most valuable work for the Empire, it still falls short of what an Imperial Council of Defence ought to be and might be. The principal defect is undoubtedly the absence of a truly professional element. Until the officers, who attend by virtue of their office or otherwise, can be justly regarded as the recognised exponents of an instructed and enlightened professional opinion, they will fail to carry that weight in the deliberations of the Committee to which their position entitles them, and will constantly be placed at a disadvantage in the presence of civilian colleagues more expert than they in the arts of discussion and dialectic, and scarcely less familiar with the "higher learning" of the naval and military sciences.

There is only one way in which this defect in the constitution of the Committee can be removed. The "higher learning" of the profession, the study of the great problems of Imperial Defence, and of the utilisation of the resources of the Empire in time of war, must be specifically imposed upon the two Services, and the best-qualified members of those Services must be given ample opportunity of pursuing their important and onerous studies under the most favourable conditions.

It is not apparent whether the practice of adding unofficial civilians to the Committee of Defence is to form the rule or to be confined to a single exception. It is possible that some good reason for the practice may exist, but its disadvantages are great and obvious.

No objection can be taken to the summoning of an individual on a special occasion and for a special purpose. Such a proceeding is entirely in accordance with the intentions of the late Prime Minister (Mr. Balfour) as communicated to Parliament. It is quite conceivable that the peculiar and expert knowledge of one man may be of great value when problems connected with the subject in which he is a specialist are under discussion. But to add a perfectly irresponsible unofficial civilian to the Committee as a permanent member is quite another matter, and invites a departure from established usage which has not, hitherto, been communicated to Parliament or recommended to the public.

A civilian in this position enjoys opportunities accorded to no other subject of the Crown. Without warrant or commission from any one

he can claim and exercise the privilege of ransacking the most confidential documents entrusted to the custody of the great Military Departments. He is responsible to nobody. He is not a Minister, and cannot be dismissed. Parliament votes him no salary, and he is, therefore, entirely independent of the House of Commons. He may be the active agent in a policy which gravely affects the future of the nation. If the policy succeeds he is at liberty to take the credit ; if it fails and ends in disaster, the blame must fall on the shoulders of all his colleagues, while he goes scot-free. No one can measure the scope of his activities ; for he works in the dark. The salutary rules of discipline and prudence which preclude our great public officers from inspiring the newspapers, or carrying on a polemic under the anonymity of a journalist, do not apply to him.

In a word, the position is, and must be, exceptional in the highest degree. It is probably safe to say that the practice is not a desirable one, and that, if resorted to at all, it should only be permitted under very clear regulations.

It is to be desired that in any future appointments the reason for such an appointment should be clearly stated. It would also be well if the precise powers and functions of the person appointed were made public, and a salary, nominal or otherwise, attached to their office, so that, like other members of the Committee, his conduct could, if necessary, be discussed and challenged in Parliament.

At a time when the ramifications of international finance are so widespread and so important, it would also be well to demand that non-official members of the Committee should accept a self-denying ordinance, and should have no connection, direct or indirect, with any of the great industrial or financial undertakings whose prosperity is indissolubly interwoven with the working out of the political problems of the world. It is conceivable that such a case might occur in connection with future appointments.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XXXVI.

1. There is need for a more complete organisation for war.
2. Arguments in favour of this contention will be found in the memorandum dated 20th October, 1902.
3. The Committee of Imperial Defence was greatly improved by its reconstitution in 1902.
4. In theory the Prime Minister is the only permanent member of the Committee of Defence.
5. In practice the Committee of Defence is usually composed of the Prime Minister, the First Lord of the Admiralty, and the Secretary of State for War, with their principal professional advisers, and such other Ministers as may be specially concerned in the proceedings, and of private individuals who may be called in by the Prime Minister.
6. The Committee, as constituted, has done, and is capable of doing, very valuable work ; but there are defects in its composition.

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7. The principal defect in the composition of the Committee is the absence of a truly professional element.

8. The Committee also suffers from want of continuity.

9. The want of continuity, as far as the political element is concerned, is inevitable. It is not inevitable in the case of the naval and military element.

10. It is essential that a truly professional element should be added to the Committee.

11. The professional element can only be brought into existence by the creation of a true "General Staff."

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE COMMITTEE OF IMPERIAL DEFENCE AND THE GENERAL STAFF: PART II

THE GENERAL STAFF OF THE ARMY.

THIS work does not deal with the Navy, and it is not intended to include in it any suggestions as to the methods by which the officers of the Navy may be assisted to study the problems of Imperial Defence. Much has already been done by the establishment of the War College, and in other ways. More remains to be done, and there is no reason to believe that the Board of Admiralty is unconscious of, or indifferent to the fact.

Nor is there any need to argue at length in favour of the creation of a new machinery for the higher instruction of the Army. Happily there is at length a consensus of opinion upon this all-important subject. Successive Ministers have recognised the need for a General Staff of the Army, and it is satisfactory to observe that not only is there agreement as to the general principle, but an almost equally close agreement as to the steps which should be taken to give effect to it.

It was natural that in 1905 the Secretary of State for War, who for many years had made a close study of the organisation of the Army, and who in the memorandum of 1902, already referred to, had put on record his conviction that the duties of a General Staff were not adequately performed

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in our Army, should endeavour to utilise the authority conferred upon him to supply the institution which he had so often declared to be indispensable.

THE MEMORANDUM OF 1905.

The issue in November, 1905, of a memorandum, signed by the Secretary of State and addressed to the Chief of the General Staff, furnished the public with evidence that an attempt had been made to perform the duty and to lay the foundation on which a real General Staff for the Army might in time be constructed. The document is printed below. As a matter of fact, it forms but one of a series of papers in which the all-important question of the composition and functions of the Staff were dealt with.

The memorandum itself is brief and simple, but it must not be supposed that its preparation and issue were unattended with difficulty. As it stands, it is the outcome of much deliberation; every phrase was chosen with care, every statement was carefully weighed. In the judgment of the Secretary of State the memorandum represented the opinion of the best and most progressive soldiers in the Army, but it would be an exaggeration to pretend that it found universal acceptance among all schools of thought, that its publication was unattended with difficulty, or escaped some sharp criticism.

Fortunately there are signs that in this matter, at any rate, there is likely to be continuity of policy, and the Army Order issued on the 12th September, 1906, is an almost verbatim repetition of the memorandum of November, 1905.

THE PERSONNEL OF THE GENERAL STAFF.

It must not, however, be supposed that the mere issue of a memorandum, or of an Army Order will

enable us to make good in haste the neglect of many years. To-day we are sowing the seed; another generation must reap the crop. It is of the essence of a true General Staff, that those who compose it should possess the qualities which study and experience can alone produce. We cannot produce a General Staff merely by adding a new page to the Army List, or by clothing a certain number of intelligent officers in new uniforms. The General Staff, if it is to be worth anything, must be the product of twenty years of intelligent and sympathetic work. This work must be done by the Army itself. The future of the General Staff lies with the officers of the Army to make or to mar.

One more word of caution is necessary: we must not be too ready to criticise the personnel of the General Staff at the outset. There are always those who are ready to point out that General A. or Colonel B. does not become wiser or better than his brother officers because his name has been transferred to a special list. The fact is indisputable, but it need not disconcert us. It is perfectly true that in the beginning nearly every member of the General Staff will necessarily be a learner; but the material from which we have to select is admirable, and provided the whole body of workers are animated and directed by a sympathetic and competent chief, there can be no doubt that in a few years' time we shall have a General Staff which, as regards personnel, will bear comparison with any similar body in the world.

THE CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF.

It is true that in the first instance the Chief, as well as his pupils, will be a beginner and a learner. But this inevitable drawback will in large measure be compensated for if the officer selected possesses

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the qualities which are essential to success. The ideal Chief of the General Staff cannot be found ready made, but he can be fashioned out of a man who possesses certain qualities. He must be a man of fresh and receptive mind, acquainted with the power of social pressure in this country, but, by position or character, free from its influence. It is not necessary that he should be a profound student, but it is necessary that he should have been brought up in a school in which intellect is held in honour, and study and research are regarded as necessary preliminaries to the acquisition of knowledge. He should have some knowledge of military history, and be capable of appreciating its value and its lessons. He should be a man held in respect by the Army. He should be willing, and indeed eager, to encourage and to accept help from his subordinates; and, above and before all, he should be a professional soldier whose whole life is devoted to the Army and whose principal ambition is to leave it better than he found it. There are men so qualified in the British Army, and under the guidance of one of them the General Staff, constituted upon the lines which have been laid down, will grow and prosper.

The following is the memorandum drawn up by the Secretary of State in 1905 and communicated by him to the Chief of the General Staff:—

MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR ADDRESSED TO THE CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF (11TH NOVEMBER, 1905).

At the meeting of the Army Council held on the 9th August, 1905, certain general conclusions with regard to the formation of the General Staff were arrived at. These conclusions were as follows:

- (a) Officers of the General Staff should be selected on their own individual qualifications, and not on account of any appointment which they are holding, or for which they may be selected.

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- (b) The list of officers should at present be small.
- (c) Appointment should be for four years.
- (d) At the end of every four years from the date of his first appointment to the General Staff, the desirability of the retention of an officer's name on the General Staff list should be considered.
- (e) The general principle of accelerated promotion should be accepted, the question of the extent and nature of this promotion to be deferred for further consideration.
- (f) The list of duties of the General Staff, as detailed in Appendices E and F of Army Order 30 of 1905, should be further amplified.
- (g) There should not be a separate General Staff Corps.
- (h) The possession of a Staff College Certificate, though most desirable, should not be an absolute *sine qua non* for being placed on the General Staff list.

The principles approved by the Council must now be regarded as governing the composition and duties of the General Staff, and the time has come for taking action in accordance with these decisions. It is desirable that in carrying out the work entrusted to you by the Army Council you should have before you a clear statement of the objects for which the General Staff is to be formed and the duties which it is to perform.

It is impossible to secure continuity of policy in Army administration without reasoned and well-ordered thought, and it is with a view to securing this desideratum that the formation of a General Staff has been undertaken by the Army Council. At present, as in the past, every officer in the Army has his own opinion on every military subject, the nett result being that there are almost as many opinions as there are officers. Hence, the advice tendered to the Secretary of State by his responsible military adviser is the individual advice and opinion of the officer tendering it, and it is *not* the carefully balanced opinion, after mature thought and deliberation, of a collective body of experts. Thus, continuity of thought, of purpose, and of action are wholly impossible, and in their place we find disjointed and unconnected plans. No true "military opinion" does or can exist.

There are, moreover, many duties which are now not performed at all, or which are insufficiently performed, and which ought in the future to be carried out by officers of the General Staff.

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The objects to be kept in view in forming such a Staff are as follows :

- (1) To gather the ablest men in the Army together, and by some system of advancement and promotion to make sure that the fortunes of the Army are always in their hands.
- (2) By means of these men, to form a school of military thought, which shall be abreast, or ahead of that of any other army.

From this it follows that the officers of the General Staff should be the ablest and most energetic officers of the Army, and should be in the prime of life. Their duties may be defined as the duties of war and training for war.

The possession of a Staff College certificate, though most desirable, will not be an absolute *sine qua non* for selection. In an Army such as ours there must be exceptional cases in which officers who have not obtained the certificate should clearly be placed on the General Staff list.

So, also, administrative experience will be a valuable but not an indispensable qualification for admission to the General Staff.

The eligibility of an officer for the General Staff should not be affected by his Army rank. In one regiment an officer with eleven years' service may be still a subaltern, in another an officer of four years' service may have attained the rank of captain. Some limitation is necessary, but it will be based upon length of service and not upon Army rank.

The following are the general lines on which the formation of the General Staff will proceed :—

The General Staff will not form a separate corps.

Officers will be selected on their own individual qualification, and not on account of any appointment which they are holding, or for which they may be selected. The list of selected officers will at present be small.

Appointments will be for four years. At the end of every four years from the date of his first appointment to the General Staff, the desirability of the retention of an officer's name on the General Staff list will be considered.

It is clear that the organisation of the General Staff should proceed with care, and a probationary period will be desirable in all cases. This period, in the case of those to be immediately selected, should not be less than one year.

Subject to a first list being drawn up and approved by the Army Council generally, all future selections for, and promotions in, the General Staff will be recommended by the

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Chief of the General Staff alone, without the intervention of the Selection Board or of the Army Council. In no other manner can the Staff be made homogeneous and its action inspired by a single purpose.

It is evident that the Chief of the General Staff must have absolute power over all the officers of the General Staff. He will be as free as possible from ordinary office routine work, but must be the sole adviser of the Secretary of State on all matters of strategy or of military operations. He will, of course, remain a member of the Committee of Imperial Defence. He will also be charged, as I have already indicated, with the selection and personal supervision and training of the officers of the General Staff.

There is little doubt that ultimately the position of the Chief of the General Staff will become so important that, in order to secure continuity of action and ideas, it may be necessary to extend his tenure of office beyond that laid down in the present regulations.

It is necessary to define in some way the duties of the General Staff, and in the Army Order of 1st January, 1905, which gave effect to the recommendations of the War Office Reconstitution Committee, certain duties are assigned to that Department both in peace and war in Appendices E and F. No definition of those duties, however, can pretend to be exhaustive, and some elasticity of interpretation must be allowed. It is evident that, though certain posts may be reserved for officers who are members of the General Staff, it will (apart from these exceptions) be altogether wrong to associate the officers of the General Staff with particular posts. It would, moreover, be easy to draw a definition of staff duties which would deprive the Chief of the General Staff of the very wide liberty in dealing with his officers which he ought to possess.

The Chief of the General Staff ought to be able to prepare officers for special work months, it may be years, ahead. For instance, an officer having the requisite qualification for a particular class of work should be instructed to acquaint himself with the language necessary to carry out that work, or with any other special branch of knowledge which will enable him to serve efficiently in the post to which he is ultimately appointed.

The reward for good service on the General Staff will be accelerated promotion. Such promotion will be given as a matter of course to all officers who, having been placed on the General Staff list, have completed a term of employment

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and are considered sufficiently meritorious to be retained upon the list for further employment. First appointment to the list will confer no claim to promotion, which should be a reward for successful service, and not a preliminary to such service.

The principle of accelerated promotion being accepted, the question of the form in which it should be given remains to be determined.

This question is not without difficulty. The strict regimental system of our Army interposes obstacles in the case of cavalry and infantry, which do not arise in the case of other branches of the Service or in foreign armies. These obstacles cannot be ignored. There can be little doubt that substantive promotion without any conditions as to whether or not an officer shall go back to his regiment is, in theory, by far the best and most logical proceeding; but the objections which may be taken from the regimental point of view are apparent.

On the whole, it would seem that the system of "Brevet," up to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, and substantive promotion above that rank, is likely to be the best solution of this difficult problem.

It is not impossible that in the future a time may come when there will be an interchange of officers between cavalry and infantry, engineers and artillery, etc. Hitherto the whole tendency of our military education has been to segregate officers of the various arms. I cannot help hoping that progress may eventually be made in the direction of interchangeability.

The above are the main points by which you should be guided in initiating the formation of the General Staff, and you will now, therefore, take the necessary steps for giving effect to the decision of the Army Council in accordance with the terms of this minute.¹

H. O. A.-F.

11. 11. '05.

¹ It would appear that the only substantial difference between the Memorandum of November, 1905, and the Army Order of September, 1906, is, that in the former the appointment of officers to the General Staff and their subsequent promotion is entrusted, after the completion of the first list, to the Chief of the General Staff. In the latter it is laid down that the Army Council and the Selection Board are to share the responsibility of recommendation with the Chief of the General Staff. It is believed that this plan will be found unworkable. Unless the members of the General Staff look to the Chief of the Staff as their only head under the Secretary of State, the Chief of the Staff will never possess the authority and influence which he ought to enjoy if he is to perform his responsible and difficult duties with success.

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SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XXXVII.

1. There is general agreement as to the necessity for the creation of a true "General Staff" for the Army.

2. The memorandum issued by the Secretary of State for War in November, 1905, lays down the lines on which such a Staff should be formed.

3. The creation of an efficient General Staff must be a work of time.

4. The elements out of which a General Staff can be formed do not exist; but they can be created from existing material.

5. It is of the highest importance that the Chief of the General Staff should be an officer of exceptional qualities.

6. The issue of the Army Order of the 12th September, 1906, affords an indication that the principle of continuity in respect to the formation of the General Staff is likely to be observed.

7. The memorandum of the 11th November, 1905, and the Army Order of the 12th September, 1906, are practically identical.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE ENTRY AND EDUCATION OF OFFICERS: PART I

CANDIDATES FOR COMMISSIONS.

It would be impossible to complete a volume which purported to deal, even in the most superficial manner, with the Army, without devoting some space to the question of the officers.

The reference must, however, be brief. In the first place, the subject itself is a vast one with many ramifications, and capable of treatment from many points of view; any review of it, which purported to be more than a summary and which fell short of being a treatise, would necessarily be incomplete and unsatisfactory. In the second place, the fact that a good deal has already been written with respect to the position, duties, and prospects of the officer makes it unnecessary to import into the present chapter statements which would be mere repetitions of what has been said elsewhere in this book. Nevertheless there are certain conclusions which force themselves upon the attention of any one who has studied the working and constitution of the Army for a series of years, and which are so important, and have such a close bearing upon the general question of Army policy, that they cannot be omitted.

That the Army is short of officers is unfortunately beyond dispute. On this point, however, as on many others, the popular view is inaccurate.

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It is often stated, and it is evidently widely believed that there has been great difficulty, of late years, in securing an adequate number of candidates for commissions. As a general proposition, this statement is unfounded. More officers have been required than in previous years, and yet there has been a sufficient number of entries at Woolwich and Sandhurst to supply all the material with which those establishments were capable of dealing.

CAUSES OF THE DEFICIENCY OF OFFICERS IN THE CAVALRY AND THE BRIGADE OF GUARDS.

In two branches of the Army, it is true, there has been a serious shortage, namely, the Cavalry and the Brigade of Guards. The reasons for this shortage are somewhat complex, and cannot be discussed here at length; they form part of a large and important question, the correct solution of which is of the highest importance to the Army. The falling off was no doubt to a certain extent due to the conclusion of the South African War. There is probably a larger proportion of officers in the Cavalry and the Brigade of Guards than in the rest of the Army, to whom military service is more of an interlude in life than a profession. During the three years of hard service on the veldt, officers obtained their experience of soldiering in what may be termed a concentrated form; and for those to whom the military career appealed chiefly as affording an opportunity for taking part in a campaign, the experience was sufficient. Soldiering at home was not necessary; and while it involved all the restraints, it brought none of the interest of work in the field. A certain number of officers, undoubtedly, left the Service on this account.

The exodus of officers was accompanied by no corresponding influx of young men entering the Service. This was the most serious feature of the

situation. To some extent the shortage of entries was due to the fact that the war had already drawn upon the contingent from which officers are usually supplied; and many young men had obtained commissions in various branches of the Army who were not qualified at the time by age, or by examination.

But the main causes of the deficiency of officers lie deeper than those which have been referred to. That the question of expense was a contributory cause is possible, though very careful inquiry does not confirm the view that this was the most important or the most far-reaching cause. Indeed, there is some reason to believe that the curtailment of expenditure by superior order kept away a certain number of young men who would have been content to accept a commission, provided its acceptance involved no interference with their habits and amusements. It is not intended to imply any censure by this remark. Military service of any kind does involve restraint, and every man is perfectly justified in judging for himself whether the consideration offered to induce him to submit himself to that restraint is adequate or not. Unfortunately—and herein probably lies the most important part of the whole truth in regard to the officer question—the certainty of a professional career for the professional soldier does not form a part of the consideration offered. As long as this is the case, it is idle to wonder at the reluctance of men of means and position to sacrifice the liberties and enjoyments of civil life to the often arduous duties of a Service in which they have no certainty of winning a reward corresponding to their talents and their zeal.

REMEDIAL MEASURES.

But whatever may have been the causes, there was a serious deficiency among the officers of the

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Cavalry and the Brigade of Guards in 1903. The deficiency was so serious that it was absolutely necessary to adopt special measures to remove it.¹ Such special measures were, in fact, resorted to. Officers were permitted to enter the Cavalry and the Guards subject to their passing a qualifying examination, and to their receiving a nomination from the commanding officer of the regiment to which they were to be attached. The regulations with regard to the Cavalry and the Guards respectively were similar, but not identical. Those approved for the Cavalry were in some respects to be preferred. In both cases the officers were admitted "on probation" only, and their retention was made conditional upon their giving proof of zeal and efficiency.

It cannot be denied that the whole arrangement was an expedient adopted to meet an exceptional difficulty. It is clearly undesirable to have recourse to such methods if they can be avoided. In the present instance the step was only taken after very mature consideration, and after careful consultation with the most experienced officers in the regiments concerned. The plan has been successful, inasmuch as it has practically got rid of the shortage of officers.² What its ultimate effect may be remains to be seen. The career of the officers admitted on probation will furnish the best commentary upon the wisdom of the experiment.

WOOLWICH AND SANDHURST.

But apart from the special branches of the Service to which reference has just been made, there has not been a shortage of candidates for commissions. So far from there having been a

¹ One Cavalry regiment in India was reported to be so short of officers that it was unfit to take the field.

² Entirely as regards the Cavalry, and almost entirely as regards the Brigade of Guards

shortage, many young men have actually been kept out of the Army because the accommodation available at Sandhurst did not permit of their being accepted. Temporary relief was given by the admission of a certain number of Cavalry and Infantry cadets to Woolwich in 1905. These cadets, though living in the Academy, formed part of the establishment of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, and followed the Sandhurst course. It has long been evident that the enlargement of Sandhurst is essential; the limited accommodation has not only resulted in keeping out qualified candidates, but has compelled the Army Council to reduce the cadets' course by a year—a most undesirable step, and only to be justified by sheer necessity. The plans for doubling the capacity of the Royal Military College have long been completed, and it is greatly to be hoped that the decision to proceed with the work will be adhered to, and that the new buildings will be erected with all possible dispatch. From whatever additional sources officers may, in the future, be drawn, there will always be room for the trained cadet from Woolwich or Sandhurst, who will be the pattern and example to other officers, however obtained.

THE SHORTAGE OF OFFICERS IN WAR TIME.

But if it be true—and the fact is beyond dispute—that despite the increased demand for officers due to the growth of the Regular Army, the supply of candidates for commission has been maintained; it is also true that, as regards the real need of the Army in war—the supply of available trained officers—the Army is seriously and, indeed, dangerously short. There is nothing new about this shortage save the recognition of its existence. For many years the question of what a great war would mean to this country was sedulously avoided. Of

late, there has been an improvement in this respect. We have had the courage to look facts in the face and to commence a more or less systematic inquiry into our probable needs, and our power to fulfil them. The result has been the discovery of a fact which existed long before it was brought to public notice, namely, that in time of war we shall not have nearly enough trained officers to command our troops, and to perform the many other duties which, in war time, demand the superintendence of instructed and experienced men. The shortage has been placed by some authorities as high as 6,000.¹ This is an extreme figure ; but in view of the waste of officers in any war, and of the excessive waste in a war in which partially trained troops are engaged, it would not be safe to reduce the total very greatly.

CAN THE DEFICIENCY BE MADE GOOD ?

How is this great deficit to be made up ? Or can it, in fact, be made up at all ? Probably the full figure will never be reached. But that we ought to have, and can have if we choose, a greater reserve of officers than we at present possess is beyond question. The decision arrived at in 1904 to add five officers to every battalion at home, so as to equalise the number of officers with the number serving in the battalions in India, was a step in the right direction, and it is earnestly to be hoped that no false idea of economy will be allowed to interfere with the carrying out of the project. At the present time, no money spent on the provision of additional regular officers can be regarded as wasted. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the more trained officers we have, the more men we can afford to dispense with.

¹ Including the supply of the Indian demand, which the Indian Government is now taking steps to meet to some extent.

But neither of these measures by itself can do more than remedy glaring deficiencies. It is in the Reserve that officers are chiefly wanted. We have already, indicated in the chapter dealing with the Militia,¹ how a very large addition can be made to the number of trained officers available for service in time of war. The method there advocated, that is to say, the actual training of officers with the men whom they are destined to serve with in time of war, is the only true solution—the only one which really satisfies military conditions.

There are, of course, other measures which may be taken, measures which should not be lightly condemned, but which are, after all, merely make-shifts adopted in lieu of the real thing.

It may be well to ear-mark a certain number of young men in the Universities, to give them a little professional teaching, and to contract for their services in time of war. The material is good, but the number of candidates will never be large, and in all probability the officers thus secured will, in many cases, be obtained from among those who, but for this avenue to military service, would have passed through Sandhurst or Woolwich in the ordinary way. The remedy may, in fact, prove worse than the disease. To encourage officers or men to avoid all the drudgery and hard work of military life in time of peace, with the certainty that they will be given the opportunity of serving with every advantage in the way of emolument, distinction, and promotion in time of war, is a somewhat doubtful policy, as long as the maintenance of a regular standing army is considered essential to the defence of the nation. It is desirable to pledge as many young men as possible to come forward in time of war; but we must be careful not to make their position as attractive as that of the regular officer, and at the same time much easier.

¹ See pages 66 and 196.

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OFFICERS OF THE AUXILIARY FORCES DO NOT
CONSTITUTE A RESERVE OF OFFICERS FOR
THE REGULAR ARMY.

Much has been said of the need for better training for officers of the Auxiliary Forces, and an improvement in the training, as well as an addition to the numbers of these officers is most desirable. Everything should be done to raise the normal level of instruction and accomplishment, and to make it easy for zealous and capable officers to attain a high level of excellence in the military profession.

But those who look to the Auxiliary Forces to supply a reserve of officers in time of war fail to understand what the situation really is.

Both the Militia and the Volunteers are seriously under-officered at the present time. Moreover, though there are officers in both branches of the Service who will stand comparison with the best of their comrades in the Regular Army, the level of professional accomplishment and of experience in command is necessarily low.

The Militia and the Volunteers alike are maintained in the form of a force intended to fight under its own officers and in its own units. It is true that under peculiar conditions it has been found possible, and by some it has even been considered desirable, to utilise the Auxiliary Forces as a reserve for the Regular Army. The cream of both Forces has been skimmed to provide officers and men for the army in the field. But a moment's reflection will show that the process is utterly unsound and illogical. It may, indeed, prove to be very dangerous. If the Militia and the Volunteers are to fight—and if they are not to fight they ought not to exist—they will need not only every officer they possess, but will have to make demands upon the Regular Army to supplement their deficiencies. To take away the best officers from the Volunteers

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in time of war would be a suicidal step, and any plan of forming a reserve which depends upon keeping officers in the Militia or Volunteers in time of peace, and taking them out in time of war, stands self-condemned. The true way of forming a reserve of officers or of men is to pass officers through the corps in which they will be required to serve in time of war. How this may be done has already been pointed out. The method may be varied, but the principle is essential.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XXXVIII.

1. There is no serious shortage of officers for the Regular Army, in time of peace.
2. The shortage which for a time existed in the Cavalry and in the Brigade of Guards has been relieved.
3. There is a serious shortage in the number of officers required for war.
4. It is a mistake to look to the Auxiliary Forces to supply the Regular Army with officers in time of war. The Auxiliary Forces themselves are already very short of officers.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE ENTRY AND EDUCATION OF OFFICERS: PART II

THE EDUCATION OF THE OFFICER.

SPACE does not permit of more than a passing allusion to the all-important question of the education of the officer; but that under existing circumstances it leaves much to be desired is beyond question. This is greatly to be regretted, for it is no exaggeration to say that the material which furnishes our officers is, for its purpose, the best in the world. But that the officer is as fully educated as he ought to be, or that the education he receives is of precisely the kind best fitted to make him of value to the Service, no one who has made a close study of Army problems will pretend. The education given at Woolwich is exceedingly good, so is that given at Sandhurst, though the unfortunate shortening of the period of instruction is to be regretted. But it is the education which the officer receives before and after leaving Woolwich and Sandhurst that leaves most to be desired. If the cadet on passing his entrance examination were really educated up to the point which, by virtue of his years and of the large sums expended upon his schooling might reasonably be expected, the rest would be easy. Not only could professional instruction be begun from the first day of the course, but much of the lecturing, cramming, and

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labour to which officers are so often condemned in their subsequent career might be avoided.

THE ARMY AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

To quarrel with the great public schools is to come into conflict with one of the most solid vested interests in England. And yet it is absolutely impossible for an observer who has been privileged to see at first hand the working of the great services in this country not to feel that the public schools, as at present conducted, fall lamentably short of what institutions which receive the unfailing support of the wealth and influence of the nation, and which enjoy almost a monopoly of the teaching of a large class of the community, should be. There are exceptions to every rule, and there are very many exceptions to the general statement which follows; but nevertheless it is true to say that if the boys who come up from the great public schools were really educated, if they had received anything like an educational equivalent for the hundreds, or even thousands, of pounds which have been spent upon them, the British Army would gain enormously, and the career of the British officer would be greatly simplified and rendered much pleasanter than it is at present. That such a remark as this will ensure contradiction, and may even excite anger, is possible; but there is evidence growing, from day to day, which tends to show that the view which is here expressed is gaining adherents.

There is, of course, a recognised and time-honoured reply to any criticism of the public-school standard of teaching. "These boys," we are told, "may not learn much in school; they may be unable to read, write, cypher, or spell; they may know nothing of the literature or language of any country, including their own, but they are learning

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to be men. This country has become great, and will remain great, because it turns out men. Look at the Civil Service, the Indian Civil Service, the Bench, the Bar. Have not all those who have earned distinction in these professions been at the public schools? What more can you want?"

But that is not the whole story. *Post hoc* and *propter hoc* are two very different things. Hitherto, in a non-competitive world, a system in which every man of position and influence sent his son to a public school as a matter of course, and used every advantage which his wealth, influence, and position conferred to ensure his son's employment and promotion, all went pleasantly, and it mattered little whether the schools taught ill or well.

But now it is beginning to matter, and young men, both in this country and abroad, are learning in places where to learn is "good form," and where the right to teach is considered a privilege which only those who have been taught to utilise it are justified in exercising. The Universities which, alas! are still too intimately bound up with the least good parts of the public-school system, are already beginning to show the result of the new competition. The Army has long felt it; and the crammer is the obvious, legitimate, but not wholly satisfactory result. If the Army is to continue to be dependent upon the public schools, and if the public schools will insist upon perpetuating an antiquated system, then the Army will continue to suffer.

THE EDUCATION OF THE NAVAL OFFICER.

It is high time that the fallacy that the public-school system and a public-school education can alone produce manliness, independence of character, and the power to lead and to govern, were exploded.

Its maintenance is absolutely necessary to excuse the failure of the public schools to teach those things which can be measured by exact standards.

There are 13,043 officers in the Army ; there are 4,818 officers in the Navy. Of the former probably three-fourths have passed through the public schools. Of the latter scarcely one in a hundred, and yet who is there that will pretend that the naval officer is inferior, in peace or war, in the arts of command, diplomacy, or government ; in action or in sport, in the lecture-room or the ball-room, to his military comrade. It is notorious that there is no such inferiority.

That the average naval officer is better taught for the purposes of his profession than the military officer can hardly be disputed, and that in the future the superiority is likely to be accentuated seems highly probable.

What, then, is the conclusion to be drawn from the consideration of these facts, if facts they be ? That the public schools should cease to teach our officers ? Most certainly not. The great schools, with their noble traditions, their delightful associations, their camaraderie, their power of affecting the imagination of those who owe them allegiance, are a priceless possession which no deliberate act could create, and only a blunderer could destroy. The true conclusion is that in their own interests, and in those of the Army, the public schools should begin to teach, should make learning as important and fashionable as games, and should teach what they profess to teach thoroughly. The first help must come through the Universities, which ought to be the guides instead of the followers of the public schools. Much can be done by the parents ; much will be done in the long run by the pressure of competition, when parents begin to observe that a public-school education is an adverse handicap in the battle of life. Much, too, can be done by the

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State and by such departments of it as the Army, whose requirements undoubtedly affect the public schools very directly.

Whether the State might not do even more than it does is a matter for consideration.

The Royal Naval College at Osborne is a model to all schools for young boys. Might not the principles which have been applied to the establishment at Osborne be also applied, with intelligent modifications, to the service of the Army?

That the example of Osborne could not be followed exactly is obvious. The naval cadet enters at $12\frac{3}{4}$ years of age—too young to be selected by competition. His education costs but £75 a year; its value is probably three times that amount. The parent gains the difference, but in return he dedicates a boy to the Naval Service from his earliest years. The State is not a loser by the bargain.

But older boys can compete, and public opinion would probably not tolerate their nomination at the age of sixteen to a State school organised on the scale of Osborne or Dartmouth. It would be necessary, at any rate, to charge fees which would cover the whole cost of the establishment. This would mean an annual payment by the parents of from £200 to £250 a year, and the amount would be prohibitive to many who desired, and who were entitled to send their sons into the Army.

A SUGGESTED REFORM.

The example of the United States College at West Point is, however, not without value in this connection. Students who have passed through that college are not compelled to enter the United States Army, though the majority of them do so. If a college on the lines of Dartmouth were to be established for boys of from sixteen to twenty, a

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college in which teachers were chosen because they could teach; in which the pupils tried to learn because learning was to their interest and was the fashion; in which a boy who would not, or could not, learn had to make room for another who could and would—then a great step in advance would have been taken. The fee should be sufficient to cover all costs; but at the end of the course the successful student who elected to go into the Army, or indeed into any other branch of the national service, might receive back half his fees. The State would gain an article well worth paying for. The nation would equally gain by the entry into civil life of those successful students who, after going through the course, elected to pass to a profession not under the control of the State.

Having made some study of the various methods of training for the Services, the author is strongly of opinion that in the foundation of such a college lies the best hope for army education, and that the competition and example of such a college would prove an invaluable tonic for the great public schools.

THE OFFICER'S PAY.

In another chapter attention has been drawn to the paramount importance of making service in the Army a real profession.¹ Until the young officer who loves soldiering, and who has the brains and energy which entitle him to succeed, can feel that when he joins he is really entering a career *ouverte aux talents*, we shall continue to lose many men whom the Army can ill spare, and we shall retain many men in positions below their deserts, and in which they will always entertain feelings of resentment or despair.

It is certain that until we so modify our

¹ See page 410.

educational arrangements as to get the best value out of the admirable material which is contained in the corps of officers, the Army will be less good than it ought to be and might be.

But one thing is necessary to attract and keep good men, in addition to the chance of succeeding, namely, the means of living.

The pay of the British officer, especially of the field officer, is too low. We cannot reasonably go on raising the standard of requirement, adding to the demands on the time, the brain, and the patience of the officer; we cannot insist that the officer shall become yearly less of an amateur and more of a professional, unless we are prepared to accept the obvious consequence of our demands. A professional man must receive a professional wage, and this is what the British field officer does not receive. The British subaltern is in receipt of £100 a year; a compositor of the same age receives the same amount. It is no disparagement to the compositor to say that his education has not cost as much, and that his accomplishments are, as a rule, less than those of an officer who has been through Woolwich or Sandhurst.

The lieutenant-colonel of a battalion, a man of forty-five years of age, with twenty-five years' experience, draws £365 from a grateful country. He is worth far more. His full commercial value—his value judged by the rarity of the article he offers—we cannot, perhaps, afford to pay in cash. But in some form or another we must pay it. It will be said that we get enough officers at present rates. That is true, but present rates are made up of two parts, a fact too often forgotten. We pay partly in cash, partly in position and prestige. It is possible to induce men to serve for either of these considerations, or for both; but it is not possible to induce them to serve for neither. The prestige of military service must be maintained if we are to

keep our officers. And it must be remembered that officers are human ; they will gladly "scorn delights, and live laborious days," but only with an object, and because the exigencies of the Service demand that they should do so. Men of good education and position, men who have risked and suffered much, and who are any day ready at a call to risk and suffer more, must be treated with consideration if their willing service is to be retained. Every extra demand made upon the time of an officer, every reduction of the amenities of his life, is so much taken off the salary he receives. This fact cannot be too clearly recognised ; and if we desire, as we all do desire, to get poor men as well as rich men into the Army, to keep them there, to work them harder than most professional men, and to make their whole career dependent upon their unflagging exertions, then we must pay them accordingly. £365 is not enough, and the Army Council will be wise if it recognises this fact, and makes a substantial, and not a merely fanciful, addition to the pay of these invaluable officers.¹

The economies which would have resulted from the complete acceptance of the proposals of 1904 would have provided ample funds for this purpose.

One word must be said before concluding this necessarily imperfect summary. The question of officers is intimately bound up with the question of promotion. Reference has been made to this matter elsewhere. It is sufficient to say here that unless and until the Army becomes a *profession* in the same sense that the Navy is already a profession, we shall fail to induce many capable and eligible men to take commissions. We shall also fail to retain in the Service many excellent soldiers who desire nothing better than to give their best

¹ This increase would involve a corresponding increase in the Navy ; but it would be as reasonable in the Navy as in the Army.

to the Army, but who find that under the existing system they are irrevocably condemned to a limited sphere of action inadequate to reward merit, or to satisfy ambition. The change in our Army system which can alone enable us to realise this ideal must necessarily be slow; it may take years to accomplish; but already there is a spirit abroad, especially among the younger officers, which will make the work of any future Army Council seeking the end with tact and tenacity, possible, if not easy of attainment.

THE QUESTION OF EXPENSE AND THE REMEDIES
FOR EXTRAVAGANCE.

Much is often said, and with reason, with respect to the expenses which the custom of the Service, much more than the regulations of the War Office, impose upon officers, and especially upon junior officers. It is as easy to make sumptuary laws for civilians, as for soldiers, but it is scarcely more easy to enforce them for the latter than for the former. The question of how to reduce the expenses of officers is one of extreme difficulty. It has long occupied, and continues to occupy, the anxious attention both of the officials in Pall Mall and of the officers commanding the troops. It is a mistake to suppose that the efforts which have been made have met with no reward. Undoubtedly much has been done to reduce necessary expenses, and to discourage the imposition of heavy burdens by regimental action or social pressure. In many Infantry regiments, and in some Cavalry regiments, an officer can live comfortably on a very moderate income. The regulation by which officers are permitted to hire their chargers from the Government has in itself relieved mounted officers of a very considerable burden. The best commanding officers have carried out the orders of the War

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Office in the spirit, as well as in the letter, and have resolutely discouraged collective extravagance. Individual extravagance is more difficult to check, but even in this respect a good commanding officer can do much, and much has in fact been accomplished. Nevertheless, the fact remains that in many regiments the scale of living imposed by laws which, under existing conditions, no authority can break down, is so high as to exclude any but wealthy men.

This is clearly undesirable, and it is in the interest of the Service that such a state of things should cease. But here again it is necessary to proceed with care. Rich men are not, by virtue of their being rich men, any better than poor ones; but they are certainly no worse; and many excellent officers enter the Service and remain in it because soldiering is not incompatible with the kind of life which their means enable them to lead. It is not desirable to make hard and fast regulations which can only result in driving this class of officer out of the Army.

Probably the best solution of this, as of many other difficulties, is to increase the professional interest of the officer's career, and at the same time to increase the rewards for senior officers of proved merit.

Rich men will often remain in a profession which, while it brings no pecuniary reward which can tempt them, is full of interest and responsibility. A poor man will devote his energy and his brains to such a profession provided he is certain that if he gives his best, he will earn sufficient to enable him to maintain his station in life. In a word, the best cures for the evil of excessive expenditure in the Army appear to be these—

(a) A resolute determination on the part of the War Office and of commanding officers to discourage all unnecessary collective expenditure.

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(b) The creation of a class of professional officers by the creation of a profession.

(c) An increase in the emoluments of field officers.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XXXIX.

1. The education of officers leaves much to be desired.
2. The part played by the great Public Schools in the education of officers is not altogether satisfactory.
3. A public-school education is not essential to the creation of character and independence.
4. The officers of the Navy possess both character and independence, but are not educated in the Public Schools.
5. The Royal Naval Colleges at Osborne and Dartmouth furnish an example which might with advantage be followed, with modifications, in connection with the education of officers for the Army.
6. The pay of the officer, especially of the field officer, is inadequate, and should be increased.
7. The scale of expenditure imposed upon officers is still unduly high, but has been greatly reduced of late years.
8. Expenditure cannot wisely be reduced by severe regulations. It can be best reduced by making the Army possible as a profession.
9. It is desirable to retain both rich men and poor men in the Army.

CHAPTER XL

ECONOMY AND FINANCE

ECONOMY WITH EFFICIENCY.

THERE can be no doubt that there is one point with respect to our Army problem on which all men of all parties are agreed. The desire for economy is universal and sincere. Unluckily, beyond this point the unanimity with regard to Army expenditure is less marked. With some persons, economy means reduction and nothing else. With others, it means an expenditure of the money necessary for the upkeep of the Army with as little waste and as little misapplication as possible. The latter view does not exclude the possibility of reduction, but it does not imply it.

In the opinion of the author there is room for economy in both senses ; in other words, a reduction in the total cost of our military establishments is compatible, not only with the maintenance, but with the increase of efficiency. Much has been said in previous chapters which, if properly understood, expresses the truth of this proposition ; and something more will be said here.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS VIEW.

For the moment, however, it is desirable to devote our attention to the ideas of economy which, as a rule, prevail in the House of Commons—the body which, in fact, controls the expen-

diture. It is no exaggeration to say that economy, as understood in the House of Commons, would not be so understood by any assembly of business men in the world dealing with their own affairs and their own interests. Nine times out of ten, the demand for economy is a demand for a reduction pure and simple, and, indeed, many members appear to take a certain pride in declaring that they care nothing about details, provided the aggregate Vote be reduced.

It need hardly be said that a business firm whose operations were conducted by directors who took this view, would very soon be in the Bankruptcy Court.

The House of Commons in its economical fits rarely, if ever, pauses to ask whether the Army it needs can be bought for the money it pays. And yet that is the first question that ought to be asked and answered.

There is a school of thought in Parliament and among the public whose members seem to imagine that, while an army of some sort is a necessary evil, it is possible and even expedient to buy that army by the pound, and that the fewer pounds that are bought in any one year, the better will be the economic condition of the purchaser. This is a fallacy so obvious, and yet so popular and so dangerous, that a brief comment upon it is necessary.

THE COST OF AN UNSUCCESSFUL ARMY.

The only army that it is worth while to spend a farthing upon is an army which, in any war that we are likely to undertake, will be victorious in the field. Every shilling paid in respect of an army which is destined to be beaten is sheer waste; it is worse than waste. The country that pays loses not only the shilling, but is in danger of losing an

infinite number of other shillings, which must be paid as the penalty of defeat.

Let those who wish to realise what is the cost of defeat in war read Sir Robert Giffen's valuable essay on the Franco-German War of 1870.

To use once more a homely illustration, the nation which pays for an army that will not win is like the man who, wishing to span a space of twenty feet between abutments, economises the cost of three feet of bridge. His seventeen-foot bridge will cost him less than one twenty feet long, and the saving from the House of Commons point of view will represent the "economy" he has effected. But, nevertheless, every penny he has spent will be as absolutely wasted as if he had thrown it into the sea.

Put in this plain manner, the matter seems obvious, and yet the occasions on which the party of economy, so called, in the House of Commons pauses to inquire whether the Army we have got is greater or less than that which is needed, are rare in the extreme. The ordinary Parliamentary expression of a desire for economy takes the form of a vote for the reduction of men or guns, or of both. Such a reduction in any given case may be wise and justifiable, or, on the contrary, it may be absolutely insane. But, as a rule, not only do those who advocate the reduction make no attempt whatever to show that there is any military justification for their proposal, but they actually make a merit of expressing their contemptuous indifference to such "a matter of detail."

HOW TO REDUCE WITHOUT LOSS OF EFFICIENCY.

It has been said that in all probability a reduction in the cost of the Army is possible, and is possible without loss of efficiency. It must be clearly understood, however, that *primâ facie* the conclusion

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ought to be the other way. In business, a man who has enormously extended the scale of his transactions, who is employing more men, undertaking new enterprises, and running fresh risks, is very unwise if he does not increase his capital and his reserve fund. During the last fifty years the British Empire has greatly extended its business, has multiplied its risks, and added to its responsibilities at a rate which the most enterprising firm has rarely outstripped. That we have increased our means of defence in proportion to the increase of our liabilities, no informed person will pretend. The additions to the Navy, which have been considerable, and the additions to the Army, which, in view of what has been done by our rivals, are very small, correspond in no degree to the increase of the wealth we have to guard, or the danger to which that wealth is exposed. It should be clearly understood, therefore, that the onus of proof lies upon those who propose a reduction.

THE PLAN CARRIED OUT IN THE NAVY.

Nevertheless, we believe that a reduction can be effected, and can be effected consistently with safety and efficiency. It can be made, however, on one condition only—namely, that we follow in respect to the Army the principles which have been adopted with such success in the case of the Navy. What are these principles? They are simple enough. The first is that the country should only be asked to pay for that which is likely to be of use in war. The second is that we ought to keep nothing on a war footing in peace time which can, without loss of efficiency, be kept on a peace footing. The third, that whatever we pretend to keep on a war footing should be really fit for war. The Admiralty have applied these principles with absolute consistency and fearlessness. They have got rid of scores of

useless ships, and have done so in face of the same kind of outcry that invariably greets any proposal to follow a similar course with respect to the Army. Fortunately, the Admiralty have paid no attention to this outcry, and, in the words of one of the chief promoters of this beneficent reform, have been "ruthless, relentless, and remorseless."

The first line of the Navy, which is required for peace purposes—but may at a moment's notice be required for war purposes also—has been mobilised to the last man, and is ready for action at any hour of the day or night. The second line of the Navy has been turned into a true reserve. The ships are there, stores and ammunition are there, a sufficient number of officers are there, and a sufficient number of trained men. Within forty-eight hours the remainder of the officers and men can go on board the ships, knowing their duties and accustomed to perform them. As a result of this policy the Admiralty have reduced the expenditure on the Navy by five millions, and have greatly increased its efficiency for war. This is true reduction, and it is also true economy.

THE PROPOSALS OF 1906: REDUCTION WITHOUT ECONOMY.

For the Army, a different system is proposed; a system which certainly involves a reduction, but which as certainly is not an economy. The destruction of units, accompanied by the rigid maintenance of the Linked-Battalion System, is probably the least economical form of reduction that can be adopted. It is true that the upkeep of a certain number of officers and men at present with the colours is saved; though we are told that these officers and men are eventually to be replaced by an equivalent of equal efficiency, and of equal, if not greater, numbers. As to what precise shape this equivalent

is to take, the country is not yet informed.¹ But this much is certain, that if the substituted force is to be really efficient for war, money must be spent upon it, and this sum, whether large or small, must be deducted from the saving which it is hoped may be effected by the destruction of units.

It must be clearly understood that not only will the saving in cost be small in any case, but that it practically precludes any further saving, except at a sacrifice of efficiency which even the House of Commons is hardly likely to contemplate with indifference. That this is inevitable becomes apparent when we consider what are the conditions under which the Linked-Battalion System must perforce be worked. As has been explained elsewhere (Chapter XVII.), this system depends upon a perpetual equality between the number of units at home and abroad respectively. As a matter of fact, this equality has never existed during the lifetime of the system, nor is there the slightest reason why it ever should exist.² If, by some strange accident, the equality which does not exist to-day were to exist to-morrow, it would cease to exist the day after, and nothing whatever save confusion and extravagance ever has resulted, or ever can result from striving after the unattainable. The plain fact is that, as has been pointed out in an earlier chapter, we do not require seventy-two battalions of the line at full establishment and on a long-service term of enlistment in the United Kingdom in time of peace. The number is greatly in excess of our requirements. The upkeep of the battalions is costly, and they do not produce, and on the present basis never will produce, an adequate Reserve.

¹ October, 1906.

² An attempt has recently been made (August, 1906) to produce an appearance of equality by bringing back battalions from South Africa and elsewhere, but the illusion has only been created by concealing from the public eye the fact that a number of battalions still abroad are, by a time-honoured system of official make-believe, supposed to be at home (see page 164).

THE NAVAL PLAN APPLIED TO THE ARMY.

It is only by following the example of the Navy that we can reduce the cost of these battalions without detriment to the efficiency of the Army. The battalion which is not required for active service in time of peace must be placed on the same footing as a ship with a nucleus crew. The officers must be retained, the "skilled ratings" must be retained, and also a sufficient number of men to permit of proper training being conducted. In one respect the battalion must differ from the ship: it must be the training school through which must be passed large numbers of young men who, having received that training, will be added to the Reserve. The economists will do well to note that the saving on every battalion on a Short-Service basis is no less than £22,600 per annum, or two-fifths of the cost of the battalion on its present basis.

Nor does the saving which is effected in respect of the men with the colours adequately represent the true economy effected. A curious and instructive example of the immense saving which may be effected by the adoption of a system of Short Service for the battalions at home has recently been furnished by the Secretary of State for War. The figures supplied by him are as follows:—

TABLE SHOWING THE PRODUCT IN RESERVISTS OF LONG- AND SHORT-SERVICE BATTALIONS RESPECTIVELY, AND TOTAL COST OF SOLDIERS PRODUCED.

| | Number of Men | | Total. |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------|
| | With the Colours. | With Reserve. | |
| Two battalions Guards, Short Service | 1,300 | 1,914 ¹ | 3,214 |
| Two battalions Line, Long Service . | 1,700 | 517 | 2,217 |
| Excess of Guards battalions | | | <u>997</u> |

¹ This is the actual reserve of two battalions of the Grenadiers, but a slight reduction ought to be made with respect to the future in view of the fact that the establishment of Guards battalions has been lowered.

COST OF THE SHORT-SERVICE MAN 435

| | £ | s. | d. |
|--|-----|----|----|
| Cost of a Guardsman on mobilisation for war, being the average of men with the colours, and reservists . . . | 29 | 10 | 0 |
| Ditto, ditto, Linesman . . . | 46 | 6 | 0 |
| Excess of cost of Long Service over Short Service per man ¹ . . . | £16 | 16 | 0 |

It must be observed that favourable as the comparison is to the Guardsman, it will be even more favourable if applied to a Line battalion on the Short-Service basis. The Guardsman receives more pay than the Linesman, and his uniform is more expensive. The Short-Service soldier would receive a rate of pay not only less than that of the Guardsman, but less than that of the ordinary Linesman. Being enlisted for two years instead of three, he would pass more rapidly into the Reserve than the Guardsman, and would thus swell the number of the less costly reservists. The small cost of two or three trainings would of course have to be debited against any saving effected.

EXPENDITURE UPON THE AUXILIARY FORCES.

It is possible that economies might be effected in connection with the Auxiliary Forces; but it is doubtful whether economy in this case would mean a nett reduction of expenditure. At the present time the expenditure on the Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers under all Votes falls little short of £4,000,000. Enough has already been said to show that, inasmuch as neither the Militia nor the

¹ The Secretary of State for War has objected to the comparison between the Long- and Short-Service man, respectively, on the ground that part of the cost of the Line soldier is defrayed by the Indian taxpayer. But the objection has no weight. The cost of the article is the same whoever pays for it. Moreover, the gain is almost equally great, if Long- and Short-Service battalions retained exclusively at home are made the subject of comparison.

Volunteer Force is at present effective for war, and that both branches of the Service contain numbers of men who will never under any circumstances be fit to take the field, it would be true economy to save the whole of the money that is now spent upon these unprofitable members. If, however, we are to have regard to efficiency, it is certain that the expenditure per head, both upon Militia and Volunteers, must be increased if proper organisation and proper training are to be secured. Unless, therefore, the number of Militiamen and Volunteers is to be greatly reduced, no serious saving in the cost of up-keep can be expected, even though the useless men and useless units be got rid of. This fact became evident in 1905, and it was because it was so clearly recognised that the Army Council sought and obtained sanction for the expenditure of an additional sum of £175,000 upon the Volunteers, and presented the Militia Vote to Parliament without any reduction.

It was the intention of the Army Council to get rid of the useless elements in both Forces, but the necessity for improving the remainder—in the case of the Volunteers, without reducing the total strength—precluded all idea of an actual diminution of expenditure. As long, therefore, as Parliament and the country desire to keep the Auxiliary Forces at their present strength, no reduction of expenditure under this head can be looked for.

THE FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE ARMY.

It is often declared by those who speak with much confidence but little knowledge about Army matters that the whole system under which the Army is maintained is extravagant and unbusinesslike. This assumption being made and

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accepted, it is an easy transition to the statement that large economies can be effected by adopting another system, and by more businesslike management. The view is erroneous, or rather the proposition as usually stated is greatly exaggerated, and the conclusions drawn are, in consequence, misleading and valueless. That there is room for better management in the affairs of the Army is undoubtedly true; there is probably no large concern which is not susceptible of improvement in its methods. Much of the business of the Army is conducted in a manner which would not commend itself to business men. But it must not be forgotten that the conditions imposed upon the Army are utterly different from those under which any ordinary commercial undertaking is carried on.

An ordinary business has a capital account. The Army has none. The expenditure of every year must begin on the 1st April and end on the 31st March. Money not spent in the year must be surrendered. Again, the business of the Army is, and always must be, run as if it were on "half-time" but with a full staff. The only business of the Army is to make war, and to make war successfully; but war is the exception; peace the rule. Hence immense establishments both of men and material must be maintained, vastly in excess of peace requirements. No ordinary business is run on these lines. The Army must be. Again, the business of the Army must be conducted in such a way that the whole energies of the concern may be concentrated at the shortest possible notice, on a particular point; what that point is to be nobody can foresee. This element of uncertainty is not known to a commercial concern.

The Army, moreover, is subject to the perpetual control and interference of the House of Commons. No business could face such an ordeal as this and

live. What would happen to a business whose managers were appointed by outsiders interested in almost everything except the welfare of the business; or, if the managers so appointed were removed at uncertain intervals in obedience to an unknown law; and the interests of the business were continually made subservient, not to the conditions of the trade, but to the whims and fancies of persons who had no interest in conducting the concern at a profit, in making the machinery adequate to its work, or the manager and workmen capable of doing that work? We all know that a concern working under these conditions would be in liquidation in a twelvemonth. Yet such are the conditions imposed upon the Army. With all these disadvantages—these inevitable disadvantages, it may be—the administration of the Army is by no means so wasteful or so extravagant as hasty critics would have us believe. There is always something to be done in the direction of effecting economies and improving management, and it is no exaggeration to say that not a year passes without some such economy or such an improvement being effected. But that great reductions in Army expenditure are likely to be produced by letting loose more Commissions and Committees upon the War Office is a delusion.

It is a remarkable testimony to the truth of this statement that every Administration in turn, however deeply pledged it may be to economy and to reform, has discovered after a short apprenticeship that the generalities which do duty at public meetings are out of place in a responsible office. Acquaintance with the facts soon makes it evident that a serious reduction in the cost of the Army can be achieved, and can be achieved only by a reduction of the number of men upon the active list.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN STORES ENQUIRY.

One word must be said with regard to a matter not unconnected with the matter now under review. Among the many hard and cruel things which are spoken of the Army by those who regard it as the raw material of politics, rather than as one of the most important of our national institutions, is that the officers and men are not only incapable of conducting business, but that they are untrustworthy as well as incapable. The avidity with which a multitude of critics and censors accepted every statement which was made against officers and men in connection with what were called the "South African Scandals," were not creditable to those who were so ready to condemn, so unwilling to investigate and judge. It is true that the issues were eventually referred to a competent tribunal capable of reducing vague general charges to definite and specific allegations. But much mischief had already been done by loose writing and hasty expression.

It is not too much to say that throughout the whole of the South African War the personnel of the Army was subjected to a test which it bore with a success as creditable as it is rare in modern English life. For a period of three years officers and non-commissioned officers found themselves involved in enormous and unprecedented commercial transactions. The confusion of war and the very magnitude of the operations made it impossible to supervise and control the enormous number of transactions which took place. On every side were the representatives of that commercial morality of which the true nature has been exposed by Sir Edward Fry's inquiry into Corrupt Commissions. Officers and non-commissioned officers, whose whole income in the world varied from £50 to £350, found themselves

involved in operations dealing with tens, and even with hundreds, of thousands of pounds ; and conducting business with men to whom commissions, rebates, and all the other forms of dishonesty which disgrace modern business methods, and which ran riot in South Africa, were as the breath of their nostrils.

If in this vast field of temptation, some few in humble stations failed, the circumstance is a matter for deep regret. But it is to the other side of the picture that Englishmen ought to look, and to look with pride, in judging of their Army. It is right that the very idea of corruption in a soldier should excite indignation and call for rebuke. Happily we have placed our ideal very high, and the officers and men of the Army have given us ample justification for so doing. It will be an evil day for the country when we begin to judge the honour of our officers by the same measure that is thought good enough for contractors in South Africa, or even for business men in the City of London.

But there should be no mistake. We have got a great national asset in the character and integrity of the poor men who serve the nation in the Army. *Corruptio optimi pessimum.* If, and when a soldier fails us, his failure is very great, but that is because the standard of his calling is exceptionally high. It is unjust, therefore, to be over-harsh and over-hasty in our criticisms of the business qualities of our soldiers. Their business is to fight, to lead, to endure—if necessary, to die. All these things they do for the wages of a junior clerk. In addition, we expect them, without training and without advice, to control great business transactions, and to compete with the sharpest and most unscrupulous money-makers in the world. That they should sometimes fail is scarcely a matter for wonder. That they should, under all

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circumstances, maintain the high character and integrity of the Service to which they belong, is a fact for which the Nation should be profoundly grateful.¹

TRUE ECONOMY REQUIRES EFFICIENCY AND INVOLVES EXPENDITURE.

In concluding this chapter it is only necessary to reiterate its opening sentences, which indeed contain the whole doctrine of true economy as applied to the Army. True economy is the expenditure of the exact amount of money needed to provide an army which will be victorious in any war in which it is likely to be engaged. To spend more than is necessary for that purpose is extravagance; to spend less is criminal folly. The only way to save money upon the Army, without reducing its efficiency for war, is to reduce the number of men with the colours, to strengthen the trained Reserve, and to get rid of every officer and man who cannot be relied upon to serve with effect in time of war.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XL.

1. There is a general desire for economy in Army expenditure.
2. Economy is not merely, or even necessarily, reduction.
3. It is only economical to spend money upon an army which will be victorious in war. To spend money upon any other army is worse than waste.
4. Reduction in the cost of the Army is possible.

¹ The finding of the Commission and the subsequent action of the Army Council fully support the views here expressed. As far as the Army is concerned, the net upshot of the whole matter has been the retirement of half a dozen commissioned officers and the dismissal of a dozen non-commissioned officers, accompanied by some expressions of disapproval increasing in severity in inverse proportion to the rank and importance of the person censured.

5. Reduction can only be achieved without loss of efficiency if carried out upon the lines successfully adopted in the case of the Navy.

6. The proposals of 1906 involve a reduction in numbers ; but the maintenance of the Linked-Battalion System is fatal to any true economy.

7. A great cash saving can be effected by the introduction of the Short-Service System for battalions serving at home.

8. Economies by reduction of numbers in the Auxiliary Forces will probably be absorbed by the increased expenditure necessary to secure the efficiency of the force as a whole.

9. The conditions under which the Army must necessarily be administered are so disadvantageous, that it is not just to compare the methods or results with those of an ordinary business.

10. The derelictions of duty in connection with the South African Stores ought not to be regarded as a reflection upon the Army as a whole.

11. By reducing the numbers with the colours, by strengthening the trained Reserves, and by eliminating officers and men who cannot be relied upon in time of war, the cost of the Army may safely be diminished.

CHAPTER XLI

MR. HALDANE'S PROPOSALS

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 12TH JULY, 1906.

SINCE the greater part of this book was written, an important event has taken place. On the 12th July the Secretary of State for War made his anxiously expected statement of the intentions of the Government with regard to the Army.

Our readers are probably well acquainted with the general nature of that statement. It has been supplemented by more than one speech in Parliament, and by a memorandum issued by Mr. Haldane. The subject-matter of the statement is so closely connected with the contents of this book, and the proposals which it sets forth are likely to have such a serious effect upon the future welfare of the Army, that it is impossible to conclude the present work without some examination of the changes which are contemplated, and of the reasons by which they are justified.

It is greatly to be regretted that the examination must to some extent take the form of criticism, and for the most part of unfavourable criticism. The Secretary of State on assuming office made a reasonable and wholly justifiable appeal for time to consider the problem with which he had to deal, and for forbearance on the part of those who took a special interest in Army questions. He spoke with apparent conviction of the great advantage likely to accrue from a policy of continuity in

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Army administration, and declared his intention to pursue such a policy as far as circumstances permitted.

MR. HALDANE'S APPEAL FOR FORBEARANCE.

Mr. Haldane's appeal found a ready response. Neither in Parliament nor outside was one word said or written which could embarrass the new Minister. His political opponents recognised his ability, and gave him full credit for his good intentions. Scarcely a question was asked in the House of Commons. The Press overflowed with eulogies of the War Minister, and loudly claimed for him that forbearance, consideration, and confidence which no one seemed in the least disposed to withhold.

It is no exaggeration to say that no individual more gladly or more willingly accepted the rôle of an interested and friendly spectator than the present writer. No man can enjoy the privilege of working in the Admiralty and the War Office without being deeply impressed by the enormous advantage of continuity in naval and military policy. No one who has borne the burden and heat of two years' administration of the War Office can do otherwise than wish well to a successor, who is fortunate enough to be able to carry on the important work of the Department free from the disturbing influences of party attack, and of captious criticism. But sympathy, co-operation, confidence, acquiescence, though they may be had on easy terms from willing givers, cannot be had for nothing. Sympathy may be lost if it is neither acknowledged nor returned. Co-operation is impossible if the offer of it is rejected with contumely. Confidence is shaken when faith is broken; and acquiescence becomes impossible when everything that is said and done is a direct challenge to the expressed beliefs of those who are invited to agree.

A POLICY OF REVERSAL.

The statement of the 12th July was indeed a disappointment to many. It is not too much to say that it compelled opposition and challenged resistance. All the fine words about continuity of policy were blown to the winds. The new policy was one of deliberate and complete reversal. Even in the minutest points, the Secretary of State sought for and discovered opportunities of reversing the decisions and undoing the work of his predecessors. The definite part of the policy, the only part which has yet been explained in an intelligible fashion, was purely destructive. There was, it is true, a great constructive scheme, but of this it can only be said that it was and is a policy of "good intentions," and that as far as it can be understood at all, it seeks to obtain certain admittedly desirable objects by methods which, apparently, owe their origin much more to political than to military considerations.

It is, perhaps, not sufficiently realised to what an extent the policy of the present Secretary of State has involved a departure from that practice of continuity to which he himself has attached so much importance in theory. Some illustrations will serve to make the matter clear.

THE ABOLITION OF SHORT SERVICE.

By far the most important act of reversal is that of putting an end to short-service enlistments for the Line. This is a grievous error, but it must be admitted that it is consistent with the whole trend of the new policy, which, in itself, is a complete reversal of that which preceded it. The old policy was based upon the fundamental principle of making the Long-Service Army suffice for our peace needs only, and of accumulating a very large

trained and officered Reserve by means of short-service enlistment for the remainder of our Regular Forces and for the Militia. The new policy has discarded this principle, and, as has been explained elsewhere, has practically stopped the creation of a trained Reserve for every branch of the Army. To stop short-service enlistment was, therefore, consistent with this policy, but it was none the less a most unwise act which has interrupted a most interesting and successful experiment, with no apparent reason save the desire to undo what was done by a predecessor.

THE DESTRUCTION OF CADRES.

Again, it was part of the declared policy of the Army Council in 1905 to preserve the cadres of battalions and to effect the desired economy by reducing them to a lower and cheaper establishment. The policy of destroying cadres with their officers and reserves, was duly considered and deliberately dismissed. The Army Council in 1906 has, apparently with less deliberation, reversed the decision of 1905. Ten cadres are to be destroyed, none are to be reduced.

It was the policy of the Army Council in 1905 to spare no effort to increase the reserve of the Royal Artillery; and the Secretary of State was advised in the most formal terms, that the idea of replacing regular batteries by batteries taken from the Auxiliary Forces was contrary to all military opinion, and should under no circumstances be sanctioned.

In 1906, it has taken the Secretary of State a few weeks only to discover that the military advisers of his predecessors were absolutely wrong, and that the best boon he can bestow upon the Army is to get rid of nearly four thousand skilled artillerymen with their reserves, and of sixty-seven

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highly skilled officers ; and further, to reduce by over 60 per cent. the reserve-producing power of the remaining artillery.

The evidences of continuity of policy are not more apparent in this case than in the others which have been cited.

THE REDUCTION OF THE GUARDS.

In 1904 the fate of two battalions of the Guards hung in the balance. The question to be decided was whether they should be ended or mended. The then Secretary of State preferred the latter course, and succeeded in his endeavour to make these splendid battalions efficient. It has taken Mr. Haldane six months to find out that "ending" is, after all, better than "mending"; and two of the best battalions in the Army are to be sacrificed to his zeal for reversal.

In 1905 it was decided that a nine-years period of colour service should be instituted for the long-service men. The reasons for preferring this period to a shorter one are given elsewhere (see page 51). They are sound and incontrovertible. It has been thought fit, however, to make a merit of reversing this policy also ; and with a considerable flourish of trumpets, seven years have been substituted for nine. Neither Parliament nor the public is informed of what every soldier knows, namely, that in practice seven years means eight, owing to the invariable prolongation of the service in India. Between nine and eight the difference is almost inappreciable ; but here, too, the Secretary of State has shown his zeal for continuity by a perfectly unnecessary reversal of his predecessor's policy.

THE VOLUNTEER POLICY REVERSED.

In 1905 the Army Council decided to increase the grants paid to all efficient Volunteers, to relieve

the pecuniary burden on Volunteer officers, to make it easy and profitable for Volunteer commanding officers to follow the example of the Yeomanry and to select their men without fear of injuring the finances of their corps. It was also decided to relieve the Volunteer corps of those men whom the commanding officers had reported to be useless and unfit. Within six weeks of his accession to office the Secretary of State had reversed the whole of this policy also. The efficient men have received no additional grant, the officers have received no relief, the useless men have been retained, and are now being paid for by the Minister who vows that he "will spend nothing save on that which is effective for war."

THE REDUCTION OF THE ARTILLERY.

In 1905 it was decided, with the full consent and approval of those concerned, to relieve the officers and men of certain Volunteer batteries from the degrading duty of playing at soldiers, and to allow them to become valuable and efficient gunners, ready to supplement, but not to replace, the Regular Artillery. The great importance of this experiment, begun, as it was, with the goodwill and co-operation of the Volunteers themselves, is explained elsewhere (Chapter XXIV). Once more the Secretary of State, without rhyme or reason, without explanation, and without excuse, has reversed the policy, and the corps in question are still loyally trundling about their obsolete muzzle-loading cannon.

THE CASE OF THE NORWICH CAVALRY BARRACKS.

Into what minute detail Mr. Haldane has pursued his policy of condemning and upsetting everything that was done by his predecessors, may be illustrated by one further example.

In 1904 the Secretary of State, acting on the advice and with the full approval of all the military authorities concerned, accepted from the citizens of Norwich on behalf of the nation the generous gift of an excellent site for barracks. Money was available, plans were prepared, the foundation-stone of the barracks (which the military authorities had without a dissentient voice declared to be necessary) was laid by the Secretary of State for War. The ceremony was a striking one. Every branch of the Service was represented by troops connected with the city of Norwich and the county of Norfolk.

Without inquiry, without even a sympathetic word to the people of Norwich, without the slightest intimation to his predecessor, whose assurances he had made of no avail and whose action he was stultifying, Mr. Haldane stopped the whole proceeding.

Sufficient examples have been adduced to explain why it is that, with the best will in the world, some of those who have been associated with the administration of the Army in the past find themselves absolutely unable to support a policy which is a policy not of continuity, but of complete and apparently contemptuous reversal.

MR. HALDANE'S POLICY.

If it be impossible for those who see their own handiwork thus rudely assailed to approve of the work of destruction, it is still less possible for them to acquiesce in silence in the promotion of a policy which, while it destroys that which has been accomplished, makes no effort to replace it by a wise constructive scheme calculated to improve the efficiency of the Army for war.

That the policy announced on the 12th July does, in fact, give no promise of an improvement in the composition or organisation of the Army will be

made abundantly clear when we examine its principal parts in detail. Nay, more, it will become evident that so far from producing any improvement, it seems likely to destroy much that is good, and to make no contribution whatever to the solution of the great military problems which, by universal admission, are those which most nearly concern the well-being of the Army and the safety of the nation.

It would be tedious in this place to recapitulate the views which have found ample expression in the earlier chapters of this work. The propositions which it is desired to enforce, and the reasons by which they are supported, have all been submitted to the judgment of the reader.

It will be sufficient for the present purpose to reaffirm them, and, on the supposition that they represent the real military requirements of the country, to ask what fulfilment they find in the scheme of the Secretary of State.

THE REAL PROBLEMS OF ARMY REFORM.

The following propositions are accordingly laid down as representing the most pressing problems connected with the organisation of the Army which require early and adequate solution:—

1. To provide a thoroughly efficient Army for the purpose of garrisoning and policing the Empire in time of peace.

2. To provide a true Striking Force; that is to say, a force of all arms, employed in time of peace, so organised as to be capable of immediate mobilisation without calling on the whole of the Reserve.

3. To organise the Peace Army in such a way that in time of war it will be capable of very great expansion; and so that the added men shall be effective fighting men, led by competent and properly trained officers.

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4. To make our immense Auxiliary Army available for purposes of war.
5. To add largely to the number of our trained officers.
6. To reduce Army expenditure.

THE PROVISION OF AN EFFICIENT RESERVE ARMY.

Let us see what has been done or proposed which tends to the accomplishment of any of these purposes.

It is necessary "*To provide a thoroughly efficient Army for the purpose of garrisoning and policing the Empire in time of peace.*"

But Mr. Haldane has himself borne testimony to the fact that such an Army already exists. Indeed, he is apparently of opinion that the Regular Army is, if anything, too numerous and too efficient, for he has announced his unalterable intention, not only to reduce the Regular Army by 40,000 men, but to select the very best elements in the Army for destruction.

That the Royal Artillery of the Regular Army is the most highly trained and efficient portion of the Army, is a point which no soldier would seriously dispute. It is probably no exaggeration to say that our Artillery is the best in the world. It is this portion of the Army which comes first on the list of the proscribed. It is to lose 67 officers and 3,800 men.

THE DESTRUCTION OF GUARDS BATTALIONS.

It has been suggested as a defence, or at any rate as a palliation of the official action, that in the case of the Infantry at least, units have been selected which were comparatively inefficient, and which can with difficulty be kept up to their establishment. There is, however, no foundation

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for this statement, as will appear from the following example of what is really being done :—

Two battalions of the Guards are to be destroyed, on what can only be called the grotesque pretext that to leave them in existence would in some way or another be an injustice to the Line. One of these battalions is the 3rd Coldstream.

The condition of this battalion calls for remark. It is up to its establishment in officers and men. There are several candidates for commissions on the waiting list of the regiment. The following is a concise statement of the facts, which bear testimony to the military efficiency of this condemned battalion :—

PARTICULARS OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE 3RD BATTALION
COLDSTREAM GUARDS IN 1905-06, WITH A RECORD OF THE
PROFICIENCY OF THE BATTALION IN MUSKETRY AND
SIGNALLING.

| | Officers. | N.C.O.'s & Men. |
|--|-----------|-----------------|
| Establishment | 29 | 708 |
| Strength | 29 | 727 |
| Strength of Army Reserve of regiment | | 2,243 |
| Being a proportion to 3rd Battalion of | | 747 |

1905.—MUSKETRY.

Winners.—Coldstream Guards' Regimental Cup. Annual Course.

1st in Guards Brigade at Aldershot. Annual Course.

Winners.—Field Firing Challenge Cup in Guards Brigade, Aldershot.

At Aldershot Command Rifle Meeting.

Winners of Bowyer's Cup.

Winners, and 2nd, Grocers' Cup.

Winners.—Best Shot. Warrant Officers and Sergeants' Cup.

Winners.—Championship of Aldershot Army Corps Cup.

At London District Rifle Meeting.

Winners of Field Firing Cup.

At Bisley.

2nd in Roberts' Cup.

In addition many prizes were obtained by Teams and Individuals at the Aldershot Command and London District Rifle Meetings.

SIGNALLING.—2nd in the Home Army.

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1906.—MUSKETRY.

Out of 544 men fired, 401 were marksmen and first-class shots, and only 6 were third-class shots.

The London District Rifle Meeting (first day).

Winners of *Daily Telegraph* Cup (Marching and Shooting).

3rd in Dewar Trophy.

National Rifle Association Meeting at Bisley.

Winners of Cheylesmore Cup. Open to the Army and Navy.

Winners of Roberts' Challenge Cup. Open to the whole Army.

SIGNALLING.—3rd in Home Army.

THE CONDEMNED LINE BATTALIONS.

But it will be said that the efficiency of the Guards has never been disputed; they are destroyed, not because they are in an unsatisfactory condition, but because the feelings of the Line will be hurt if they are permitted to exist. The Line battalions, we shall be told, are to go because they are unprofitable members.

Let us see how far this indictment lies against the condemned units. Two battalions of the Royal Warwickshire are—to use the happy phrase of a Cabinet Minister—to be “scrapped.”

“The team of the 4th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment, so soon to be disbanded,” runs the account of the All-Ireland Rifle Meeting, “were loudly applauded as they came up, time after time, to receive the cups which their splendid efficiency had gained for them. Of the ten trophies put up for competition amongst dismounted troops of all arms, this fine battalion has won no less than seven.” No wonder Lord Grenfell, the General Officer commanding in Ireland, spoke of the exceptionally fine performance of the 4th Royal Warwickshire, and thought “Sir Herbert Plumer would agree with him that he would be justified in sending a report of this exceptionally good performance to the Army Council; and that he

would most certainly do." It is to be hoped that the Army Council duly received and appreciated this eulogy on one of their victims. So much for the Royal Warwickshire.

The same thing is true to a greater or less degree of the other battalions which are under sentence. In one or two cases it is possible that individual battalions are under strength. But this is true also of many other battalions which it is not proposed to touch. The fact is not due to any special shortcomings on the part of the battalions selected, but it is the result of two causes which affect the whole of the Infantry. In the first place, the expiration of the term of service of the three-years' men has emptied the ranks more quickly than recruiting has filled them. Long-service recruiting will, in time, remove the deficit. In the second place, a considerable number of men have recently been discharged from the battalions at the end of their second year's service; for this action on the part of the War Office the battalions are in no way to blame. It is curious to note that a bounty of £10 is actually being offered (October, 1906) to induce men to transfer from the proscribed battalions to other regiments.

The economy in any case is slight; the loss to efficiency is great. It is practically certain that, following the regular routine of our military policy, we shall, in a very short time, be endeavouring in a panic to re-create that which we are now so lightly getting rid of.

It is quite evident, therefore, that what is being destroyed is the best, and not the worst in the Army. The Regular Army cannot possibly be made better or stronger by depriving it of nearly 400 officers and 40,000 men.¹ The reduction is, therefore, not made on military grounds. It is

¹ It is calculated that, including the Reserves, the Regular Army will ultimately be reduced by the number stated in the text.

necessary to look elsewhere for the motive. We have not far to look. The motive is political, and the reduction is made in response to political pressure, and not for the benefit of the Army.

THE PROVISION OF A STRIKING FORCE.

"It is necessary to provide a true Striking Force—that is to say, a force of all arms mobilised in time of peace, or capable of immediate mobilisation without calling on the whole of the Reserve."

It must be understood that the term "Striking Force" is used in the sense in which it is employed in an earlier chapter (Chapter XIII.), and of which the nature is indicated in the definition given above. This is not the sense in which it has been used on more than one occasion by Mr. Haldane, who has applied it to the whole of the expeditionary force which the country can dispatch after mobilisation.

It is needless to recapitulate what has been said at length elsewhere as to the value of a Striking Force, and as to great danger to which the country has been exposed and may again be exposed in consequence of its being unprovided with such a weapon. It is sufficient to point out that, whatever may be the intentions of the Secretary of State, he has given no indication that he has as yet considered the question of providing such a force. He has, however, taken one active step which will go far towards destroying the one organised body of troops at present available in an emergency. The Brigade of Guards is not maintained on a war footing, but its constitution is such that the brigade of four battalions, which has hitherto been stationed at Aldershot, can take the field at a few days' notice without calling upon the Reserve. The destruction of two battalions of the Guards will involve the breaking up of the

Aldershot Brigade, and will, *pro tanto*, diminish our power of acting with rapidity in the early and all-important stages of a war. True to the main inspiration of his policy, the Secretary of State has put a stop to the execution of the scheme announced in 1904, which, if proceeded with, would have given us a true Striking Force of 16,000 men of all arms.

THE EXPANSION OF THE ARMY FOR WAR.

But the failure of the new policy in respect to these two items is unimportant in comparison with its utter breakdown in respect of the third, and most important of the problems which demand solution. That problem is, "*To organise the Peace Army in such a way that in time of war it will be capable of very great expansion; and so that the added men shall be effective fighting men, led by competent and properly trained officers.*" No one has dwelt with greater emphasis upon this need than Mr. Haldane himself. It is strange, therefore, that not only should he have given us no indication as to how he proposes to supply it, but should have taken the very measures best calculated to limit the expansion of the Army and to reduce the numbers of the reserves. That such is the case is capable of very simple demonstration. It is sufficient to enumerate the steps which are actually in contemplation and to note their obvious effect upon the Reserve. They are as follows:—

1. The Guards are to be reduced by two battalions. The Guards, being the only short-service infantry left in the Army, produce a reserve more rapidly and more cheaply than any other units. The reserve produced by two battalions of the Guards is no less than 1,900 men, compared with 517, the number produced by a two-battalion regiment of the Line.

2. On taking office, Mr. Haldane found seven battalions of the Line enlisting over 50 per cent. of their recruits for two years' colour service. These battalions were creating a large and cheap reserve. Mr. Haldane has stopped the whole of this short-service enlistment, and has, *pro tanto*, diminished the Reserve.

3. Ten battalions (two of the Guards and eight of the Line) have hitherto been producing reservists. Mr. Haldane has destroyed all these battalions, and, with them, the whole of their reserve-producing power.

4. The Horse and Field Artillery are notoriously short of reservists. With this fact before him, Mr. Haldane has contrived to combine every method by which the Reserve can be made still more inadequate. In the first place, he has reduced the Artillery by 3,800 men; and the whole of the reserve due to these 3,800 men will ultimately cease to be created. In the second place, he has raised the period of colour service from three to six years.¹ Any one who is acquainted with the details of waste in the Army will realise that this means a diminution of the number of reservists produced, not by one-half, but by something like five-sevenths of its total.

THE EFFECT OF THE REDUCTIONS ON THE RESERVE.

The result of all these new measures will be, as stated, a very serious reduction of the reserve-producing power of the Army. So far from the power of expansion being increased, it will be greatly and permanently diminished. Neither the Infantry nor the Artillery Reserve created under the new scheme will be sufficient to mobilise the units.

¹ This step is necessary in order to provide the Indian drafts, but it ought not to have been applied to all the batteries. The effect of it will be as stated in the text.

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Instead of the Infantry Reserve of 140,000 men, with their due complement of officers, which the scheme of 1904 was capable of producing, the scheme of 1906 will produce a reserve smaller than that which proved totally inadequate in 1899.

THE UTILISATION OF THE AUXILIARY FORCES— THE MILITIA.

The fourth problem which requires solution is how "*to make our immense Auxiliary Army available for purposes of war.*" It is impossible to pronounce a definite opinion upon the plans of the Secretary of State with regard to the utilisation of the Auxiliary Forces in time of war. The author's views have been expressed in the earlier chapters of this book. Those who have read these chapters will have gathered that the author wholly approves of the tardy, but no less welcome adoption of the view, that the Militia must be rendered available for service abroad in time of war, and must practically form part of the Regular Army. How that object may be achieved has been explained; how Mr. Haldane proposes to achieve it we have no means of knowing. The one positive proposal which emerges from much verbiage is wholly unacceptable. The Militia will not go through the farce of training as units, merely in order to give up to the Line regiment, in time of war, a single company composed of the best men in the battalion.

It is a good thing that the policy of utilising the Militia Artillery to supply drafts and the personnel of ammunition columns to the regular batteries in time of war, has escaped the general proscription declared against the work of Mr. Haldane's predecessors; but the assumption that 12,000 men—practically the whole force—will accept the new conditions is extravagant and unreasonable.

Everybody is agreed that the Militia ought not

to be "bled" for the advantage of the Line. How this end may be accomplished is explained in Chapter IX.; but Mr. Haldane will not have this way, and what the other way is he has not told us.

THE VOLUNTEERS.

With regard to the Volunteers, we are equally in the dark. Whether the great Citizen "go-as-you-please" Army under the management of the County Councils is to supersede the Volunteers, or whether the Volunteers are to be handed over to these highly competent authorities, we are not permitted to know. What we do know is that "not another penny is to be spent upon the Auxiliary Forces." This is a strange doctrine, and difficult to understand. It would appear, however, that the new Force, whatever its nature, is to be either the Volunteers as they are, under another name—in which case the revolution will not be very great. Or, it will be better than the Volunteers—in which case it is most important we should know how much better it is to be, and how the improvement is to be effected without any further expenditure, and without a reduction of the numbers. Or, lastly, the new Force will be less good than the Volunteers; and, inasmuch as the Volunteers, as at present constituted, have been officially declared to be unfit to meet foreign troops, this change—however "popular"—can hardly be regarded as a step in advance from the military point of view. But, indeed, the information vouchsafed is so scanty that discussion of this subject is scarcely profitable. The pledge, which the Secretary of State gave to take the House of Commons fully into his confidence, has not been fulfilled either in the letter or in the spirit. Nothing but the vaguest generalities have been

vouchsafed to the country. The "Assembly of Notables" which has been convened for the purpose of conveying the views of its Chairman to the Army Council does not appear to have completed its labours; or, if it has, the result of those labours has not been communicated to Parliament.

That the Secretary of State is animated by the best intentions we know, for he has frequently apprised us of the fact; but in what concrete form these good intentions are to take shape we do not know. It would almost seem as if ignorance on this point extended to the War Office itself.

THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL OFFICERS.

The fifth problem which was declared to be urgent was that of "*adding largely to the number of our trained officers.*" We are told that this all-important question has not escaped the attention of the Secretary of State. That being so, we must be content to wait. It is no doubt sometimes well *reculer pour mieux sauter*, and this is perhaps why the Secretary of State has begun by putting a stop to an arrangement which would have automatically produced 2,500 additional regimental officers; and has by ukase communicated to Parliament "for information," but not for discussion, reduced the establishment of Regular Officers by 367.

THE REDUCTION OF ARMY EXPENDITURE.

The sixth and last item on our list is that which relates to expenditure.

It is essential "*to reduce Army expenditure.*" Something has already been said upon this subject in the chapter devoted to Economy, and little need be added here. Money is of course saved by getting rid of units, but no economy is effected. On the contrary, the method adopted is the most ex-

travagant and clumsy plan that can be found; and the one most certain to lead to additional and reckless expenditure in the future.

It is doubtful, however, whether the saving so effected will exceed that which must inevitably result from the reduction in numbers which must take place automatically during the next two years, owing to the simultaneous discharge from the colours of the twelve-years men and the three-years men. Again, there must be a great reduction in Army Estimates owing to the completion of the rearmament of the Royal Artillery. But neither of these are true reductions, or economies in the proper sense of the word.

If the Militia is really to be made efficient, and is to be sent abroad, more money will have to be spent upon it. If the Volunteers are to have new guns these guns must be paid for, as also must the ranges on which they are to fire. Meanwhile the linked-battalion system will hang like a log round the neck of a Minister anxious for a reduction which shall also be an economy.

The saving made under these circumstances will be inadequate. The House of Commons will ask for more; and more will have to be given. Then it will be that the Army will realise the debt which it owes to those soldiers who have advised the Secretary of State that the only way to save money is to destroy units.

A "POPULAR" POLICY, AND ITS DANGERS.

In conclusion it need only be said that as far as they are intelligible, the proposals of the Secretary of State are for the most part in direct contradiction with the views expressed in this volume. Of the "pious aspirations," the same cannot be said. Everybody is agreed in entertaining them. If and when Mr. Haldane proceeds to embody them in

concrete form, and transforms them from aspirations to accomplishments, he will deserve and will receive the support of men of all parties. But that day has not yet arrived, and if we are to judge the unknown by the known, its dawn is not immediate.

Unfortunately, an Army policy, especially in this country, may be and often is "popular" in exactly inverse proportion to its merit. Real self-sacrifice; the hard and thankless work of professional preparation; expenditure on objects not immediately apparent: these are all "unpopular." To destroy a regiment because, as one reformer pleasantly put it, it is "closely connected with Society," is a popular concession to a certain class. To hand over more business, more appointments, more expenditure to County Councils and similar bodies may be popular; to play at soldiers generally may be popular; and as long as peace continues the policy which provides all these attractions may be very popular also. But the trial comes in time of war; and when that day arrives the day of repentance will have gone by. That is the danger which inevitably attends the introduction of politics into questions of military preparation.

"*Populus vult decipi, decipiatur.*" Since the days of Micaiah, the son of Imlah, there has always been found somebody to say smooth things to the people, and the people love to have it so. But, none the less certainly, will come the day when the sun will go down in blood on the stricken field of Jezreel, and the people will be left as sheep without a shepherd—a defeated army, and a ruined nation.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER XLI.

1. Mr. Haldane's appeal for patience and consideration pending the production of his proposals has been responded to by all parties.

2. Mr. Haldane has praised the policy of continuity in Army matters, but the policy he has actually adopted has been one of reversal.

3. The reversal has been applied both to general principles and to minute details.

4. The new policy does not improve the Regular Army ; on the contrary, it weakens it and makes it less efficient.

5. The new policy fails to provide a Striking Force.

6. The new policy does not provide for the expansion of the Army in time of war.

7. The new policy does not make the Auxiliary Forces available for war.

8. The new policy does not add to the number of our trained officers ; on the contrary, it reduces the number.

9. The new policy will not result in any serious saving in Army expenditure, and, if fully carried out, will involve an addition to our expenditure.

10. The new policy destroys the good and retains the bad.

11. The new policy will greatly reduce the Reserve of the Army.

12. The new policy as regards the Militia and Volunteers is obscure, and, as at present explained, gives no indication of the methods by which the Militia and Volunteers may be made efficient.

13. A popular policy is not necessarily a wise military policy.

14. The true test of Army policy is afforded only by war.

CHAPTER XLII

CONCLUSION

PRINCIPLE AND DETAIL INSEPARABLE.

THE reader whose patience has permitted him to reach the concluding chapter of this book, cannot have failed to note, and has doubtless been disposed to condemn, the frequent juxtaposition of broad statements of principle on the one hand, and of elaborate and sometimes lengthy discussions of matters of detail, on the other. Such a method, however undesirable from the literary point of view, was nevertheless inevitable if the task which the author had set himself was to be performed with any approach to completeness.

To rest content with a statement of principles is to invite the hostile criticism of those who are weary of generalities, and who distrust theoretical reforms which do not take into account the idiosyncrasies of the Army, and the infinite complexities of our military organisation. On the other hand the accumulation of a mass of detail and the consideration of a variety of minor questions must naturally be distasteful to those who, while they are unacquainted with the minutiae of Army business, are nevertheless dissatisfied with the present condition of our defences, and look for changes on a grand scale, the result of a clear appreciation of the principles which ought to underlie any scientific system of national defence.

It is because the author believes that no reform of

our military arrangements can be undertaken with any chance of success unless it is based on clearly recognised principles which are accepted by the majority of representatives of all schools of thought, that he has dwelt, sometimes to the point of iteration, upon certain general truths which he believes satisfy the required conditions. It is because he is convinced that the existing military organisation of the country can be immensely improved and strengthened by applying those general principles to all branches of the Service, that he has dwelt at length upon the steps which, in his opinion, can with advantage be taken in order to translate theory into practice.

It is hoped that the arrangement of the preceding chapters has been such as to give effect to these intentions.

A POLICY FOR THE FUTURE.

It will, however, doubtless be convenient to summarise, in the final pages of the volume, the general conclusions which it is desired to enforce, and the course of action which it is suggested might with advantage be adopted in the immediate future.

The organisation of the resources of the nation for war is not satisfactory. While the cost is great, the protection obtained is inadequate, and insufficient provision is made for carrying to a successful issue wars in which the Empire may easily be involved. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary that changes should be effected in our organisation for war.

THE NAVY.

The principal offensive and defensive weapon of the nation is the Royal Navy. The Navy is at the present time in a state of exceptional efficiency,

and is numerically adequate to its purpose. The true policy of the nation is to maintain the Navy in its present condition of efficiency, and on no account to allow its existing preponderance over possible opponents to be diminished. The contention put forward by some politicians to the effect that a reduction of our naval programme acts as an inducement to other Powers to reduce their programmes, is a dangerous and demonstrable fallacy. Such a reduction is always welcomed by other Powers as affording them an opportunity to increase their respective navies.

THE REGULAR ARMY.

While no serious change is required in the composition and organisation of the Navy, considerable changes are required in the composition and organisation of our land forces. The perfecting of the Regular Army ought to be our first care. It is certain that in any war in which the country may be engaged the services of the Regular Army will be required. But we may in the future, as in the past, be engaged in a war in which the Auxiliary Forces, or such part of them as is by law confined to service within Great Britain, or the United Kingdom, will not be required or available. For this reason, if for no other, the perfecting of the Regular Army should be our first care. Every soldier serving in the Regular Army, or in the Reserve of the Regular Army, is available under all conditions for war abroad or at home.

It is conceivable that the Regular Army in conjunction with the Royal Navy might enable us to emerge with success from a serious conflict. It is not conceivable that the Auxiliary Forces without the Regular Army could render the same service.

The Regular Army at the present time is in

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many respects very efficient, and is numerically adequate to the due performance of its duties in peace time; but it is deficient in two very important particulars. In the first place it is without the power of expansion in time of war. In the second place it is not yet provided with a properly trained and properly constituted General Staff. In addition to these two principal defects, the Regular Army is suffering from various minor but very important deficiencies, viz.:

A shortage of officers.

An inadequate trained *personnel* for the Artillery.

A sufficient number of recruits of the class which the pay and advantages now offered ought to secure.

These deficiencies are capable of being remedied.

The power of expansion in time of war can only be secured by the creation of a large trained Reserve. In order to furnish this Reserve, and to obtain the officers who will be required to command it in time of war, the maintenance of a large number of cadres, and the passage of a great number of men through the ranks are necessary.

The destruction of cadres should therefore cease, and the policy of destruction, in so far as it has already been put in force, should be reversed without delay. Such a reversal will undoubtedly tend in the direction of economy. The reduction of units has been insisted upon by Parliament with un-failing regularity at intervals of from five to ten years, ever since the break-up of the New Model Army in 1660. It has always been recommended on the same grounds and by the same arguments. It has always been followed by the re-creation of the cadres in a panic, at an extravagant cost, and with great detriment to the efficiency of the Army. The reduction of cadres by Parliament has never produced an economy, it has invariably led to

immense expenditure, and it has not infrequently placed the nation in great peril. The latest reductions will produce the same results as those which preceded them. The policy of reduction should therefore be arrested in the interests both of economy and efficiency. Exclusive enlistment for Long Service cannot produce an adequate Reserve. Coupled with the maintenance of the Linked-Battalion system, it must prevent the reduction of expenditure.

The policy which has led to the closing of Short-Service enlistment should be reversed, and the Linked-Battalion system for the purpose of drafting be abolished.

It is contended that the necessity for Short-Service enlistment disappears when once it is recognised that the Auxiliary Forces can and will supply a Reserve for the Regular Army. The contention is true. Its acceptance, however, can have but one consequence. The Regular Army must not be deprived of its own Reserve unless and until it is proved to demonstration that a substitute equally efficient, not less numerous, and as certainly available has been provided. At present no such alternative exists. It will be a fatal mistake to accept words, phrases, anticipations, and aspirations in lieu of realities. At present the promised alternative Reserve for the Regular Army has not got beyond the stage of talk.

The need for the creation of a General Staff is now admitted. All that is required is to pursue with patience and intelligence the policy which has been accepted.

The shortage of officers can best be removed by adding to the number of cadres, and thus multiplying the opportunities for real instruction. It will not be made good by serving out commissions broadcast to civilians who cannot find time to learn the duties of an officer, but can find time to pass

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an examination. Much good may also be done by giving effect to the policy of relieving Volunteer officers of expense, and increasing their opportunities for obtaining instruction. This policy has been needlessly arrested. All that is required is to remove the interdict, and to give effect to the proposals of 1905.

The inadequacy of the trained *personnel* of the Artillery can only be removed in one way, namely, by adding to, not by decreasing the number of trained artillerists.

In this connection the words of a very capable observer, who had just witnessed the practice of the new field gun, may be quoted.

"If," writes this trenchant critic, "any politician believes he is going to obtain officers fit to command modern quick-firing batteries from among people who do not give up their whole time to the study and practice of the science of artillery, the first battle in which these persons are engaged will disabuse him of his belief. Half-trained officers and half-trained men have no business to touch these guns. They will not get half the results obtained by the trained hands; *they will get no useful result at all*. Better far to arm them with ancient smooth-bores and the simple contrivances of museum artillery, *for then at least their efforts will not be wholly wasted*."¹

As a first step in the right direction, the Order by which the Royal Artillery has been reduced by 67 officers and 3,800 men should be cancelled. Parliament should be told at the same time that the statements which were made to it, to the effect that other Military Powers were reducing their artillery, are pure myths. The House of Commons should be told that, on the contrary, other nations are strengthening the very arm which we have decided to reduce.

¹ The Military Correspondent of the *Times*.—*Times*, Aug. 21, 1906.

An improvement in the recruiting for the Army may be effected by steady persistence in the policy which has already been adopted. Every effort should be made to improve the amenities and emoluments of the soldier; at the same time the knowledge of what has been done, and is contemplated, should be brought home much more effectively than it is at present to the classes from which we hope to obtain recruits.

Above all, provision should be made for the employment of soldiers of good character on discharge, not as an act of charity or goodwill, but as a right.

THE MILITIA.

With regard to the Militia, it is obvious that immediate action is necessary if that important force is not to be allowed to perish. The official proposals which have been made for its amendment are partly insufficient and partly wrong.

The proposal to enlist all future Militiamen for foreign service in time of war is right, and should be made effective by an Act of Parliament as soon as possible. But it is no use making the Militia liable to foreign service unless at the same time it is made fit to take part in a foreign war. At present it is deficient in the quantity and quality of both officers and men. It is composed of units so varied in their numbers and composition as to make mobilisation practically impossible. Under the existing system the competition of the Line not only may, but must destroy the Militia. All these things must be changed; and the value of any proposals for reform must be judged, not by the beautiful and comforting language in which they are expressed, but by the extent to which they meet and remove the specific evils which have been described. One method by which these evils may be removed has already been indicated in

these pages. That it must ultimately be adopted if the Militia is to be saved is certain. That the fact of its adoption may be disguised by some change of names, some small variation of times, is immaterial. The material point is that the policy which has been announced should be dropped. The idea of attaching Militia companies to Line battalions must be abandoned, and it must be clearly recognised that the Militia is not, and never can be made, a "Reserve" for the Regular Army.

The plan of training recruits for six months is worth trying, but it must be borne in mind that six months is, from the point of convenience of officers and men, the worst term that could be chosen.

The suggestion that Militiamen should be forbidden to join the Regular Army until after their first training should be adopted with great caution. It is a dangerous experiment which should not be approved and extended until the effect of its adoption upon recruiting for the Line has been observed.

Experiments with Militia Artillery, Garrison and Field, should be tried, but tried with caution; and no attention whatever should be paid to those fancy calculations which exhibit a great expeditionary force comprising tens of thousands of Militiamen. We must "do the sum to prove it." No such force is at present in existence, and no measures are being taken which are likely to produce it.

THE YEOMANRY.

The Yeomanry can with great advantage be let alone. Even the proposed legislation making them liable for foreign service in time of war should only be adopted after very careful consideration. "*Quicta non movere*" is an excellent maxim when applied to that which is good—as, for instance, the Royal Artillery, the Brigade of Guards, and the Yeomanry.

THE VOLUNTEERS.

By common consent the Volunteers cannot with advantage be let alone, and no one more readily recognises the fact than the officers and men of that important branch of our forces. The road to be followed is a plain and easy one. Already a beginning has been made by creating a Brigade and Divisional organisation. For the rest, the policy which the Secretary of State himself has insisted upon with so much force and so much justice, may be adopted with advantage. That which is good must be retained, and if possible improved; that which is useless must be got rid of. The method by which improvement may be effected has been set out in these pages: it involves the provision of better training for officers and non-commissioned officers; the relief of officers from expense; and above all, an alteration in the system by which capitation grant is paid, so that colonels may no longer have any inducement to recruit unfit men. Unless there is a great reduction of numbers, which no one recommends, all these things will cost money. The declaration of the Secretary of State that no more money is to be spent on the Auxiliary Forces must therefore be modified or withdrawn.

The question of the formation of a Reserve for the Volunteers is worthy of consideration. Such a proposal was made in 1904, and will probably be made again, but it would be a mistake to attach too much importance to such a reserve, in view of the very small amount of training which its members are likely to receive. It differs but slightly from the Reserve we already possess in the shape of those Volunteers who have left their corps, but still retain some recollection of their military exercises.

There is no reason why the experiment of creating

Volunteer Field Batteries, arrested in 1906, should not be recommenced in 1907, provided always that such batteries are not created at the expense of the Regular Artillery.

It will be seen, therefore, that the road of advance is clear, and that without incurring additional expense, without effecting any radical changes in established institutions, and without making dangerous experiments, much can be done at once. It is quite possible that when all these steps have been taken, there will be room for further developments calculated to increase the available military strength of the nation. It is possible that when the Regular Army has been perfected and provided with a good Reserve, when the Militia has in fact, and not in theory only, become a second line of effective troops capable of reinforcing the Regular Army in time of foreign war; when the 250,000 men who constitute the Volunteer Force have been made as effective as the Secretary of State for War desires they should be, there will be room for another great National Army in addition to the three armies which have been referred to.

THE NATION IN ARMS.

If there be room for such an army, and if money, interest, and goodwill are forthcoming for its creation, it is desirable that it should be called into existence. Anything which tends to interest the people of this country in the great question of National Defence is useful. But it must not be forgotten that the attempt to create such an army is not without its dangers. This fourth army, by whatever name it may be called, must either be a substitute for, or a supplement to, one or more of the existing armies. If it is to be a substitute for those which already exist,

it ought to be not only as good as, but better than that which it supersedes. To replace good by bad is a folly. Every proposal for the formation of a new National Army must, therefore, be judged by this test: is the new force displacing anything that already exists; and if so, will it serve the nation better in time of war than the force it supersedes?

DESTRUCTION AND CONSTRUCTION.

But it will be said that it is not intended either to supersede or to destroy. Unfortunately the destruction has already begun, while construction has not yet gone beyond the stage of speech-making. Assuming, however, that the destructive period has now come to an end, and that the new army is about to appear, it is nevertheless well to pause before we pronounce it wholly good. The new army, we are told, is to provide a great reservoir from which the Regular Army can be reinforced in time of war. The conception is a splendid one. Nothing better can be desired. But we shall do well, before we risk the safety of the Empire upon the security of this new improvement, to be quite sure that even if the new army is created, it will be available for the purpose intended, and that, if available, it will be capable of performing the duties which will be demanded from it in war.

These are two questions of the greatest possible importance, and hitherto neither of them has been answered.

WILL THE NEW ARMY BE A WAR ARMY?

It may be that a Parliament or a Nation which persistently refuses to regard National Defence as the duty of every citizen, which regularly and with much eloquence and conviction objects to any

truly scientific preparation for war in time of peace, and which is profoundly unacquainted with the real meaning of war, will suddenly change its historical attitude, and will throw itself heart and soul into the work of military preparation as a labour of love.

It is possible that in the event of war hundreds of thousands of men, under no obligation but that of their own inclination at the moment, may come forward spontaneously in adequate numbers, and at the precise moment when the exigencies of war make their presence in the field desirable; and may, in fact, do for us all that the Regular Army has done for us in the past, or that the standing armies of foreign countries have done in obedience to the laws under which they serve. All these things are possible. But it would be an exaggeration to pretend that any known facts in the history of this or any other country entitle us to regard them as probable. Unfortunately it is upon the perfect realisation of all these hopes that the success of the new project depends. It is right to be sanguine, it is sometimes useful to assume that to be done which ought to be done. But it is not wise to play at make-believe too much. Unless we can induce all the world to play with us, the game may become very dangerous. It is perfectly right to hope that in the event of war every man who has ever borne arms will be ready to go to the front. But it is not right, and it is not good sense, to make all our military arrangements dependent upon the correctness of an hypothesis which we have taken no steps to verify.

Nor is it wise to take it for granted that all those who do come will bring exactly that which is required of them. Certain definite conditions are required to guarantee success in war. If we are quite certain that the Army which it is hoped the new arrangements will produce, satisfies those

conditions, we may rest content. But we must take nothing on trust. We must never lose sight of the fact that it is the enemy in time of war, and not the newspapers in time of peace, who will make an effective pronouncement as to the value of our troops.

THE NEED FOR *CLEAR THINKING*.

But the Press can render the nation the greatest possible service in this, as in most other matters. It can teach the people of this country that war is not a game, that the penalties of defeat in war are inexorable, and that this country is not eternally exempt from those penalties. The lesson is urgently needed.

At an important gathering which recently took place in a large city in the North of England, a civic dignitary, a business man much and justly respected in his native town, is thus reported :

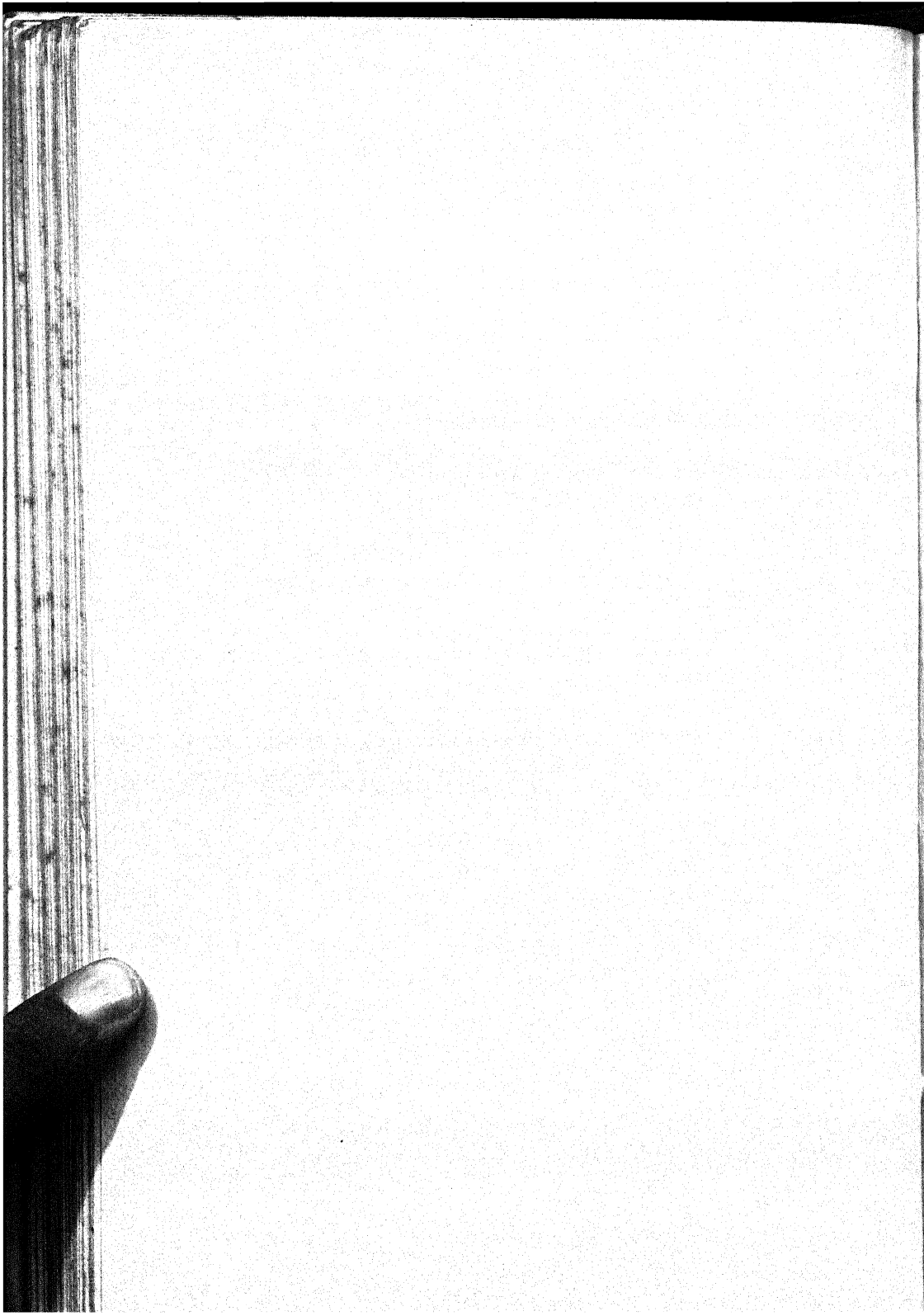
"He expressed his entire opposition to conscription, which he did not think would ever be popular with the working classes of this country, ('Hear, hear') and he did not think the time for compulsory service would ever come. We were above all a commercial country, and compulsory service would seriously dislocate our commercial enterprise. ('No, no,' and 'Hear, hear.') *When we were engaged in war the men would be there, and the patriotism; and the natives of the British Isles would not need to be taught their duty in the hour of danger.*" (Applause.)

The speaker and the speech were typical. What he said tens of thousands of Englishmen solemnly believe. But if the doctrine were applied to business matters no one would be quicker to see its amazing ineptitude than the speaker who has been quoted. A good man will try to do his duty when the call is made; but whether he is able to

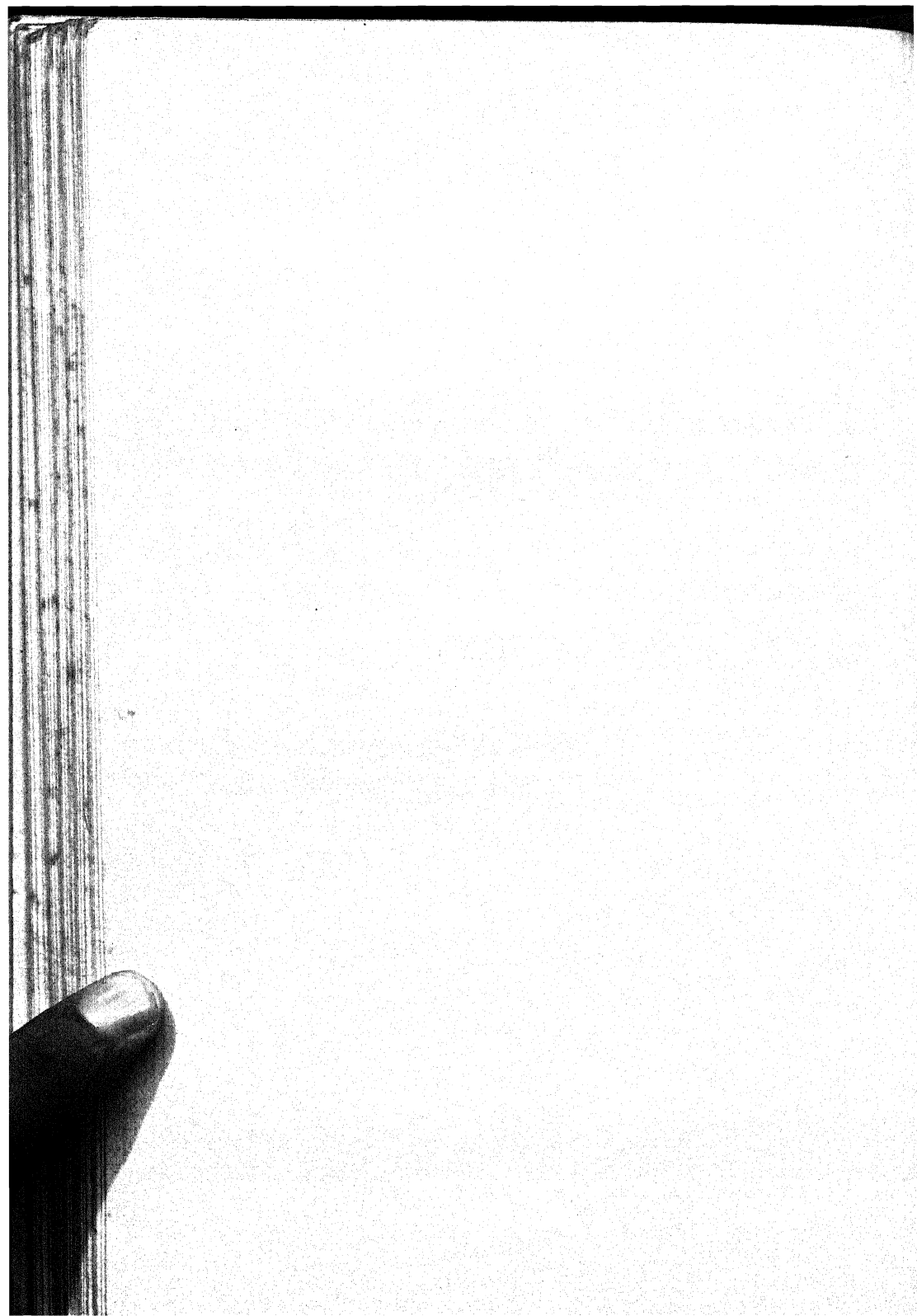
do it will depend entirely upon whether he has learnt in days of effort and application, by dint of labour and sacrifice, to perform the task which in a moment of crisis is imposed upon him.

This is the truth which the nation has to learn. Every man who helps to teach it is truly aiding the cause of National Defence. Every man who fails to realise it, or who, realising it, fails to give effect to his knowledge, thereby injures the nation and weakens its power to protect itself in war.

It is, therefore, devoutly to be hoped that whatever changes are in store for the British Army, no change will be made merely to conform to a political demand, or to satisfy mere social pressure. To obtain political support is good, and in many matters essential; to humour and please any section of society is wise, and eases administration. But to sacrifice military efficiency to either of these ends is to endanger the safety and welfare of the nation. Happily it is not necessary to make the sacrifice. There are indications that, if those who really know what war means will steadily keep their flag flying, will continue to tell the truth as they know it, will test every military reform by its power of contributing to success in war, they will not labour in vain. It is well to appeal to every class and to every section of the community to assist in performing the great duty of National Defence. Those to whom the appeal is made will receive it not less readily because it is accompanied by an intimation that they who would serve effectively must learn to serve; that goodwill and good intentions alone never achieved victory in war, and that the nation which would be spared the penalties of defeat must deliberately prepare the means to avoid it.



APPENDICES



APPENDIX I

THE FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF PROGRESS IN THE WAR OFFICE FROM OCTOBER, 1903, TO DECEMBER, 1905.

ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANISATION.

1. The Army Council was created in accordance with the recommendations of the War Office Reconstitution Committee.¹ The first meeting of the Council was held on the 14th March, 1904.

2. The staff of the War Office was reorganised in conformity with the recommendations of Lord Esher's Committee and approved by the Army Council. The following is a summary of the work performed :—

- (a) The Secretary of State was appointed, and the functions attaching to his office were varied by the terms of the Letters Patent passed under the Great Seal on the 6th February, 1904.
- (b) Two Civilian Members, the Under-Secretary of State for War and the Parliamentary Secretary, were appointed Civil Member of the Council and Financial Member of the Council respectively, and their administrative functions defined.
- (c) Four Military Members of the Council were appointed—the Chief of the General Staff, the Adjutant-General to the Forces, the Quartermaster-General to the Forces, and the Master-General of the Ordnance—having assigned to them the functions laid down in the report of the Esher Committee.
- (d) The Permanent Under-Secretary was appointed Secretary of the War Office and Secretary to the Army Council.
- (e) The Inspector-General of the Forces was appointed, his staff determined, and his functions defined by Order in Council.

¹ Hereafter referred to as "Lord Esher's Committee."

- (f) Five Inspectors for Cavalry, Horse and Field Artillery, Garrison Artillery, Royal Engineers, and Equipment and Stores respectively, were appointed to act under the Inspector-General.
 - (g) A Director of Army Finance was appointed, with an Assistant Director of Finance and a Principal Accountant as his immediate assistants.
 - (h) A Director of Military Operations, a Director of Staff Duties, and a Director of Military Training were appointed, to assist the Chief of the General Staff.
 - (i) A Director of Recruiting and Organisation, a Director of Personal Services, and a Director of Auxiliary Forces, were appointed to assist the Adjutant-General.
 - (j) Directors of Transport and Remounts, of Movements and Quarterings, of Supplies and Clothing, and of Equipment and Ordnance Stores, were appointed to assist the Quartermaster-General.
 - (k) The Master-General of the Ordnance received as his assistants a Director of Artillery and a Director of Fortifications and Works.
 - (l) A Director of Barrack Construction was also appointed to assist the Civil Member of the Army Council.
3. The principal powers and functions hitherto exercised by the Secretary of State and the Commander-in-Chief of the Forces were transferred to the new Council, and the Council was organised on a basis similar to that of the Board of Admiralty, but modified to meet the special conditions of the Army.
4. The procedure of the Army Council, the regulation of all matters concerning the exercise of its authority, forms of communication, exercise and delegation of powers, were determined.
5. The recommendations of Lord Esher's Committee with respect to administration, especially with regard to decentralisation, were examined; and such recommendations as were approved were carried into effect.
6. The Finance Department of the Army, both inside and outside the War Office, was decentralised, involving the following changes :—
- (a) The abolition of the posts of Accountant-General and Deputy Accountant-General, and of four Assistant Accountants-General; and also of the posts of Director and Assistant Director of Contracts. The

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new post of Director of Army Finance with two assistants, one for Finance and one for Accounts, was created at the same time.

- (b) The transfer of administration of contracts for the provision of supplies from the Civil to the Military Members of the Council, a clearly defined duty of review and control being retained by the Finance Member.
- (c) The separation of Army Stores, and the allotment thereof to the Quartermaster-General and the Master-General of the Ordnance respectively.
- (d) The creation of an entirely new department for the financial service of the Army in the field as well as in peace, by the amalgamation of the existing Military Pay Department with the Civil Head Quarters.

Finance Branches.

- (e) The institution of a system of decentralised accounting, carrying with it the redistribution and decentralisation of work and staff to Military Districts throughout the Empire.
- (f) The remodelling of most of the Army Votes in a form acceptable alike to the Treasury and to Parliament.
- (g) The drafting of regulations which, while they increased the freedom of the Military Members of the Council and the Commanders-in-Chief in the Districts in regard to financial control, should also be acceptable to the Controller and Auditor-General, and to the Public Accounts Committee.
- (h) The creation of a standing Army Finance Committee, to watch expenditure under the new arrangements.¹

CHANGES AFFECTING THE PERSONNEL OF THE ARMY.

1. Three years' enlistment for the Infantry and Garrison Artillery was stopped.

¹ It must be noted that the work of the Army Council in carrying out the recommendations of Lord Esher's Committee was to a certain extent ministerial only. Although great labour was involved in examining the various recommendations and in creating the machinery necessary to give effect to them, the duty of carrying out the proposals in the report was imposed upon the Council *ab initio*. Experience alone will show whether all the benefits anticipated from the changes recommended by the Committee will actually ensue.

2. Nine years' Colour Service and three years' Reserve Service for the above-mentioned arms was introduced.¹

3. Seven years' Colour Service for the Cavalry was re-introduced.

4. The plan of linking Cavalry regiments for draft purposes was abandoned.

5. Several thousand three-years men in their last year of Colour Service were discharged to the Reserve.

6. Short-Service enlistment (two years with the Colours and ten years with the Reserve) for seven battalions of the line was introduced.

7. The Royal Garrison Regiment, which produced no reserve, was disbanded.

OFFICERS.

The Number Increased.

1. The number of cadets was increased by utilising vacant accommodation at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, for additional cadets of the Royal Military College.

2. The period of cadet training was reduced as a temporary measure from two years to one—thus doubling the number of cadets entering the Army in a given year.

3. The plans for doubling the accommodation at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, were approved.

4. Steps were taken to encourage the entry of officers from the Universities and through the Militia; and arrangements made with representatives of the Universities by which students, on passing certain specified examinations, were permitted to remain for an additional year at the University, receiving one year's seniority on joining their regiments.

5. Arrangements were made whereby certificates of proficiency granted by certified Public Schools should enable candidates possessing such certificates to dispense with the "qualifying examination" for entrance into the Army.

6. The abnormal deficiency in the Cavalry and Brigade of Guards was removed by exceptional measures, consisting of the appointment of nominated candidates on probation, their commissions to be confirmed only on the holders passing a satisfactory military examination two years later.²

¹ With the result that there are now (October, 1906) over 200,000 men serving in the Army on an engagement of six years and upwards.

² It will be observed that several of these measures were of a temporary character only, and were adopted to meet the emergency caused by the abnormal exodus of officers after the South African War. The temporary measures have in every case achieved what was hoped.

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The Creation of the Selection Board.

With the reorganisation of the War Office, and the vesting of many of the powers hitherto exercised by the Secretary of State and the Commander-in-Chief in the Army Council, it became necessary to allocate the responsibility for the selection and promotion of officers.

It being held undesirable to concentrate in the War Office the power of determining the fate of the individual officer, it was decided to place the responsibility of deciding between the merits of various officers in the hands of those who had the best opportunities of judging of their merits in the field, and also were in the closest touch with the public opinion of the Army in the various commands.

With this object a Board, known as the Selection Board, was established. The Board was composed of the Inspector-General of the Forces as President, and of the General Officers Commanding-in-Chief in the five Commands into which the United Kingdom is divided.

The duties and limitations of the Selection Board were laid down by the Secretary of State in a Minute dated July 24th, 1905, in the following terms:—

“It is desirable that the exact nature of the duties and responsibilities of the Selection Board shall be made known to the Army, and with that object the Council's decision of the 18th October, 1904, as modified to give effect to the decisions above referred to, should be put on record and issued in the form set out below—

(a) The Selection Board will submit specifically to the Secretary of State the names of officers whom they consider suitable for Divisional, District, and Brigade Commands, Royal Artillery and Royal Engineer Commands, Commands of Grouped Regimental Districts, appointments as Colonel in charge of Records, Command of Regiments and Battalions, appointments as Second in Command¹ and all promotions up to and including that of Major-General.

(b) Selections for the higher commands of the Army, such as Commands-in-Chief, Lieutenant-Generals' Commands, appointments in India carrying the rank of Lieutenant-

¹ The rank of Second in Command has since been abolished.

THE WAR OFFICE :

General, and Governorships of Colonies carrying the rank of Lieutenant-General, will be made by the Secretary of State from a list of those officers whose professional qualifications render them "in the opinion of the Selection Board eligible for such appointments."

- (c) Recommendations to the Secretary of State for the appointment of officers to Staff and Departmental posts will be made by the Member of Council concerned, after consultation with the other Military Members. These appointments are distributed as follows :—

General Staff—Chief of the General Staff.

Educational appointments—Chief of the General Staff.

Training appointments—Chief of the General Staff.

Adjutant-General's Branch—Adjutant-General.

Quartermaster - General's Branch—Quartermaster-General.

Technical Ordnance Appointments—Master-General of the Ordnance.

Barrack appointments—Civil Member.

- (d) Should any appointment made under (c) involve the promotion of a Colonel to the rank of Major-General, the question of the fitness of the officer recommended will in the first instance be submitted to the Selection Board.

H. O. A-F.

24-7-'05.

Private Influence.

In order to strengthen the hands of the Selection Board, and to discourage private influence of any sort, the following circular was issued :

ARMY ORDER.

SPECIAL.

WAR OFFICE, 26th April, 1904.

The following Instructions are promulgated to the Army by direction of the Army Council :—

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PROHIBITION OF PRIVATE APPLICATIONS TO THE WAR OFFICE.

The following instructions are substituted for those promulgated by Army Order 183 of 1891 :—

1. Officers are forbidden to write private letters to officials at the War Office on official personal matters, such as promotion, appointment, postings, transfers, etc.

2. An officer on full pay and serving in the United Kingdom is forbidden to ask for an interview with any official at Army head-quarters, unless he has previously obtained from the general officer under whom he is immediately serving, written permission to do so, which will only be accorded on good and reasonable grounds. The written permission will be brought to the War Office by the officer seeking the interview.

3. Officers temporarily at home, but belonging to units abroad, who have no commanding officer at home, and who are therefore allowed to correspond officially direct with the War Office, will be permitted to ask for an interview without a written permission; but then only in cases of such urgency that a written official application will not meet the case.

4. Attempts to obtain favourable consideration of any application by the use of outside influence are forbidden, and, if resorted to, will be regarded as an admission on the part of the applicant that his case is not good on its merits, and it will be dealt with accordingly.

5. When an interview is asked for, or a letter written on behalf of an officer by any person other than himself, such application will be deemed to have been made at his suggestion, unless he can show to the satisfaction of the authorities that he has no knowledge, directly or indirectly, of such application.

By Order of the Army Council,

E. W. D. WARD.

THE INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT.

The Intelligence Department being inadequate to the needs of the Army, large additions were made to the personnel under the control of the Director of Military Operations, an officer in the Department of the Chief of the General Staff.

The duties of the branch were also extended.

THE GENERAL STAFF.

The paramount necessity of forming a General Staff upon a new basis having been recognised, the subject was carefully considered.

At the beginning of August the question of the constitution and duties of the General Staff was discussed at length by the Army Council, and on the 11th November, 1905, the Secretary of State, being satisfied that the time for taking active steps towards the formation of the new General Staff had arrived, addressed a Memorandum on the subject to the Chief of the General Staff.¹

In accordance with the conclusions arrived at, a preliminary list of 100 officers was drawn up, the names being selected by the Military Members of the Army Council in conjunction with the Selection Board, and approved by the Secretary of State.

CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE ARMY AND NAVY.

As a result of the policy adopted by the Committee of Defence, which recognised that in dealing with matters of defence the functions of the Army and Navy should be considered together, and not separately, several new departures became necessary.

1. Troops were recalled from certain stations where they had hitherto been retained for the protection of naval stations or naval stores, which in the opinion of the Board of Admiralty were no longer required. In pursuance of this policy detachments were withdrawn from the West Indies and St. Helena,² and after consultation with, and with the full concurrence of the Dominion Government, from Halifax and Esquimaux. The garrison of Bermuda was reduced.
2. The policy of disarming useless coast defences and removing obsolete armament from such defences as it was thought necessary to maintain, was steadily continued.
3. The submarine defences of the principal ports in the United Kingdom and abroad was, by agreement, handed over to the Royal Navy, the Royal Engineers remaining responsible for the searchlights, and the Royal Artillery undertaking to man such guns as it was decided to retain.
4. For the first time joint naval and military manoeuvres on a large scale were undertaken, and a force was embarked at Southampton, conveyed by a naval

¹ The Memorandum appears at p. 402 *ante*.

² With the exception of a small number of artillerymen left temporarily at the request of the Admiralty.

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squadron to Clacton, in Essex, and there landed with the co-operation of the officers and men of the Fleet.

5. Officers of the Army were encouraged to attend the Naval War Course, and naval officers took part in the Staff Rides and manœuvres of the Army.

FOREIGN WAR.

The operations in Somaliland were brought to an end, the troops withdrawn, and a Civil Government established.

THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR.

In view of the importance of the lessons to be learnt from the conflict between Russia and Japan, Lieut.-General Sir William Nicholson, with a large staff of officers of all branches of the Service, was dispatched to Tokio. Other officers were attached to the Russian Army. Instructions were given for the preparation of a History of the operations, and funds provided for the purpose.

By arrangement with the Government of India, Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton was attached to the head-quarters of the Japanese Army as a representative of the Indian Army.

FORMATION OF A CAVALRY COMMITTEE.

A Permanent Committee, known as the Cavalry Committee, was formed for the purpose of advising on all such matters relating to the training and equipment of the Cavalry as might be referred to it.

THE RE-ARMAMENT OF THE HORSE AND FIELD ARTILLERY.

The re-armament of the Horse and Field Artillery having been already decided upon in principle, and experimental work having been going on for many months, preparations were made to proceed with all dispatch on receipt of the approved specification for the new gun.

The report of the Committee was received on the 5th May, 1904, and on the same day orders were given for the manufacture of the new guns and carriages.

The work of manufacture was distributed between the Royal Gun Factories and three private firms.

The final contracts and specifications having been completed in May, 1904, the first battery of the new guns was

inspected complete by his Majesty the King on the 13th May, 1905. The total number of guns ordered was 1,050, exclusive of 48 to be made in India. There is reason to believe that the whole of the British Artillery at home and abroad will be re-armed with the new gun by the end of 1906.

THE NEW RIFLE.

The manufacture of a new rifle having become imperative, the report of the Committee of Experts which had been appointed to report upon the best type, was accepted, and orders were given for the production of a short Lee-Enfield rifle of an improved pattern for all branches of the Service.

Exhaustive trials in the hands of the troops have confirmed the opinion of the Committee as to the excellence of the rifle, which was adopted for the Royal Navy as well as for the Army.

THE MINIATURE RIFLE.

In order to facilitate the training of boys in the use of the rifle, and to secure uniformity of pattern in the rifle and ammunition used for the purpose of instruction, arrangements were made, with the co-operation of the National Rifle Association, for the production of a miniature rifle on the model of the service rifle. This rifle has now been completed and the ammunition approved.

THE ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS.

The attendance of the Medical Director-General at all meetings of the Army Council at which questions involving the health of the Army or the work of his department was authorised, and, in order that the arrangement might become fully operative, orders were given for the transmission of the agenda of the Council's proceedings to the Medical Director-General prior to each meeting.

The post of Medical Director-General was included among those which might be held by an officer of the rank of Lieutenant-General.

A central building for the Royal Army Medical Corps was commenced at Millbank.

Further experimental work in connection with inoculation against enteric was sanctioned, and much important work was done in connection with the sterilising of water for the troops by means of boiling, and the use of filters.

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VOLUNTEER ORGANISATION.

A new Brigade Organisation for the Volunteer Force was approved and worked out in great detail.¹

BARRACKS AND BUILDINGS.

Orders were given to discontinue the use of the old pattern barrack plans. A new design was prepared and approved, and arrangements made for replacing the obsolete and insanitary barracks at Norwich by a building of the new pattern.²

The policy of building large groups of barracks on the manœuvring grounds on Salisbury Plain, and at Stobs in Scotland, was discontinued, and the building of barracks projected in these places stopped.

Efforts were made to interest local authorities in the provision of suitable accommodation for the troops, and offers of co-operation were received from many quarters. Sites for barracks, ranges, and training grounds were placed at the disposition of the War Office, to be available in the event of the policy of territorial quartering being carried into effect.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF DISCHARGED SOLDIERS.

A Committee was appointed, under the presidency of the Secretary to the War Office, to enquire into the question of the employment of soldiers of good character on discharge. This Committee has now issued its report.

THE ARMY ESTIMATES.

The Army Estimates were substantially reduced. The figures being as follows:—

| | | |
|--|-------|-------------|
| Army Estimates, 1903 | . . . | £34,500,000 |
| Supplementary | . . . | 2,700,000 |
| Army Estimates, 1904 | . . . | 28,900,000 |
| Army Estimates, 1905 | . . . | 29,813,000 |
| Including £1,213,000 for the re- armament of the Artillery. | | |
| Army Estimates, 1906 | . . . | 29,796,000 |
| Including £1,187,000 for the re- armament of the Artillery. | | |

¹ The scheme has now been issued, and the organisation is to be proceeded with.

² This arrangement has since been cancelled and the old barrack retained.

LEGISLATION.

A Bill entitled the "Reserve Forces Bill" was approved for submission to Parliament. The object of the Bill was to effect various improvements in the Law regulating the Service, and utilisation of Army Reservists. The Bill passed through Parliament unopposed in the spring of 1906.

A Bill rendering all future entrants into the Militia liable for service abroad in time of war or national emergency was approved. The Bill passed through the House of Lords, but owing to the pressure of other business it was not possible to secure its passage through the House of Commons during the Session of 1905.

THE JUDGE ADVOCATE-GENERAL.

On the death of Lord St. Helier the question of the position and functions of the Judge Advocate-General came up for review. Following the practice of the Royal Navy, a salaried post was created to which a lawyer of eminence was appointed. The Judge Advocate-General was made responsible to the Secretary of State for War, and Parliamentary control over the office was thus again established.¹

FLOGGING IN MILITARY PRISONS.

It was decided to discontinue the punishment of flogging for soldiers imprisoned for military offences.

¹ The previous holder of the office being a judge of the High Court, and receiving no salary as Judge Advocate-General, and not being a Minister of the Crown, could not be made responsible to Parliament.

APPENDIX II

THE PROPOSALS OF 1904

The following Paper was presented to Parliament on the 14th July, 1904:—

SUMMARY OF SPEECH OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR WITH REGARD TO THE REORGANISATION OF THE ARMY

I

It is absolutely necessary to make a change in the organisation, composition, and distribution of the Army.

The late war, and the Commission on the War which has recently reported, has made it abundantly clear that the Army in its present form is not suited to the requirements of the country, or adapted for war.

The annual Estimates show that the cost of the Army is excessive.

It appears from the Report of the Commission on the War that the condition of the Army is unsatisfactory, because—

- (1) There is no evidence to show that the Army we possess is, either in composition or numbers, the Army which is really required to satisfy the peculiar needs of the Empire for the defence of which it is maintained.
- (2) The Army, such as it is, is not fully and scientifically organised for war; whereas the sole object of an army in a country like ours is to be able to engage in war at the shortest notice, and to emerge successfully as rapidly as possible, we have been maintaining an army in peace time a large portion of which was totally unfit for war, and of which even the effective portion could only be utilised with the help of improvised and previously unconsidered arrangements.

- (3) All branches of the Army are raised on a system which exaggerates the difficulties that must always attend purely voluntary enlistment, and, both in the Regular and Auxiliary Forces, there exist endless sources of friction which lead to wasteful effort, to bad work, and, in some cases, to discontent and misunderstanding.
- (4) It is apparent from the figures which appear in the annual Estimates that this army, imperfectly prepared, wasteful in its methods, and unsatisfactory in its results, is one of the most costly machines ever devised.

If the above statements be true, and if the evils complained of exist, what is the duty of a Minister charged with the administration of the Army and the expenditure of the public money?

His duty is to provide a remedy for the evils that exist. Not a partial, but a complete remedy; not a remedy for one, but for all the evils complained of; not a remedy for want of organisation only, but a remedy for over-expenditure as well.

Can such a remedy be found? The answer is, "Yes." It can be found if both parties are prepared to consider the question of the Army outside the arena of party discussion, and if successive administrations are prepared to agree upon a scheme of reform, and to carry it out consistently and progressively. On no other terms can the Army be reformed and its cost diminished.

Any cure, to be of value, must be appropriate to the disease. It must be a good system in place of a bad one.

It has been stated above that, up to the present time, there has been "no evidence to show that the Army we possess is, either as regards its composition or its numbers, the Army which is really required to satisfy the peculiar needs of the Empire for the defence of which it is maintained." That is a dangerous state of things which urgently needs amendment.

Has this state of things been amended? The answer is, that it has been amended, not wholly, but in part. We do not know our true requirements yet, but we see much more clearly than we did.

The Committee of Defence has been instituted. It constitutes the first serious attempt to consider the problems of the Empire as a whole: it brings together the political and the governing elements—the Navy, the Army, India, and the Colonies. It has done little yet because it has not existed

for a long time, and the work with which it is charged is very complex, and involves much professional study; but it has made a beginning. It will take many years to complete the work and to arrive at a true comprehension of the needs of the Empire. No one ought to exaggerate what the Committee of Defence has done, or is at present capable of doing, but to have made a beginning at all is an immense step in advance. We do not yet know what are the true military requirements of the Empire, but we have created an institution which will enable us in time to find out what they are.

It has been said that it has not hitherto been made apparent that "the Army, such as it is, is fully and scientifically organised for war." No one who has studied the Report of the Commission on the War, or who has been a student of army matters, can have any doubt at all on this point.

Has anything been done to improve our position in this respect? The answer is—Yes, something has been done. The whole of the War Office organisation has been reconstituted in accordance with the recommendations of the Esher Committee. The Intelligence Branch of the War Office has been greatly strengthened. The work of improving the General Staff of the Army is far from being complete, but it has been begun, and that is a point gained.

It has been said that, in the opinion of the Army Council, "all branches of the Army are raised on a system which exaggerates the difficulties which must always attend voluntary enlistment, and, both in the Regular and Auxiliary Forces, there exist endless sources of friction, which lead to wasteful effort, to bad work, and, in some cases, to discontent and misunderstanding."

The truth of this proposition requires to be demonstrated, and it can be demonstrated with ease.

Here are some facts bearing upon the question—

THE RELATION OF THE RESERVE TO THE MEN SERVING.

The First-Class Infantry Reserve is still a substitute for, and not a supplement to, the men serving. In 1899 the proportion of reservists with the battalions was as high as 52 per cent., and these reservists had, in many cases, replaced ineffective soldiers to the extent of from 370 to 460 per battalion. There is no reason to believe that, if it were necessary to mobilise at the present time, the condition of things would be altered for the better. On the contrary, it seems probable that, while the proportion of men left

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behind would be at least as great as it was in 1899, the number of reservists available to fill up the battalions would certainly be less than it was in that year.

ILLUSTRATIONS of the extent to which reservists were utilised to take the place of men in the ranks on mobilisation in 1899.

| | Total embarked. | Reservists. |
|---|-----------------|-------------|
| Field Force (all arms) | 47,081 | 20,589 |
| Infantry—5th Infantry Division | 8,037 | 3,784 |
| 7th Infantry Division | 7,920 | 4,250 |
| Brigade Division, R.A., with 5th Division | 651 | 412 |
| Brigade Division, R.A., with 6th Division | 646 | 426 |

Men available and fit for service, exclusive of Reserve, in the following units:

| | Men available. | Total strength of battery.. |
|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 81st Battery, R.F.A. | 62 | 170 |
| 82nd " " | 64 | 170 |
| 86th " " | 55 | 194 |
| 87th " " | 66 | 194 |

| | Men available. | Total strength of battalion. |
|--|----------------|------------------------------|
| 1st Battalion York and Lancaster Regiment | 390 | 838 |
| 2nd Battalion Middlesex Regiment | 521 | 1,021 |
| 2nd Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment | 422 | 902 |
| 2nd Battalion Wiltshire Regiment | 460 | 822 |
| 1st Battalion Oxfordshire Light Infantry | 438 | 789 |
| 2nd Battalion Norfolk Regiment | 438 | 969 |
| 1st Battalion East Lancashire Regiment | 370 | 947 |
| 2nd Battalion South Wales Borderers | 455 | 1,063 |
| 2nd Battalion North Staffordshire Regiment | 450 | 997 |

TABLE

illustrating the extent to which the places of men serving will have to be taken by reservists in the event of mobilisation at the present time. The statement shows the estimated number in the undermentioned battalions who would be left behind in the event of mobilisation for active service abroad.

| Corps. | Establishment. | Strength of N.C.O.'s and men on 1st Dec., 1903. | Under 20 years of age on 1st Dec., 1903. | Under 1 year's service on 1st Dec., 1903. | Absent and in civil prisons on 1st Dec., 1903. | Allowing a percentage of 5·16 for sick and medically unfit. ¹ | Total remaining behind. | Number of reservists required on mobilisation. |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|---|--|---|--|--|-------------------------|--|
| 1st Battalion Royal Scots . . | 855 | 667 | 178 | 54 | 6 | 22 | 260 | 593 |
| 2nd Battalion Cheshire Regt. . | 855 | 678 | 229 | 28 | 3 | 22 | 282 | 604 |
| 2nd Battalion Royal Sussex Regt. | 855 | 940 | 240 | 51 | 6 | 33 | 330 | 390 |
| 1st Battalion Royal Highlanders | 861 | 751 | 248 | 57 | 13 | 22 | 340 | 539 |
| 2nd Battalion Durham L.I. . | 855 | 684 | 246 | 99 | 3 | 17 | 365 | 681 |
| 1st Battalion A. & S. Highlanders | 861 | 824 | 271 | 83 | 3 | 24 | 381 | 557 |

¹ This percentage is obtained from the 1899 mobilisation figures.

THE ABSENCE OF A STRIKING FORCE.

The organisation of the Infantry does not provide for any Striking Force available for small expeditions, or for immediate action at the commencement of a war in which mobilisation becomes necessary. In 1899 it was impossible to send a single complete Infantry battalion from the Home establishment to Natal until the whole Army had been mobilised. The Royal Commission has reported that the presence of an extra brigade in Natal, at the beginning of the war, might have changed the fate of the whole campaign. We did not, and could not, send such a brigade in 1899. What was true in 1899 is true now ; we cannot send a single complete battalion from the Home establishment without calling up the Reserves.

THE FREQUENT CALL UPON RESERVISTS.

This evil is a corollary of that just referred to. It is obvious that if no expedition, large or small, can be dispatched without calling up reservists, the condition of men who have left the colours and have entered civil life must always remain precarious and unsatisfactory. It is most undesirable, both in the interests of employers and of the Army, that the position of reservists should remain as uncertain as it now is. The employers can protect themselves by not employing reservists. There is some reason to fear that they may do so. The soldier cannot protect himself, and his position seems likely to become more intolerable from year to year.

THE THREE YEARS' TERM OF ENLISTMENT.

The whole of the Army is now enlisted, primarily, for three years' service. In view of the fact that, if the drafts are to be provided, from 75 to 80 per cent. of the men in all branches must necessarily extend, and that in some branches, notably the Garrison Artillery, the extensions must reach 100 per cent., it is not easy to see how this system can be successfully maintained. It does not appear that, at the time of its adoption, sufficiently exact calculations were made with a view of demonstrating that the system would work satisfactorily, and closer calculations which have since been made, joined with the evidence of the actual extensions hitherto, indicate that the working of the system may easily become disastrous.

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The average extensions among the Infantry ought to be at least 75 per cent. At present it is about 12 per cent., in several battalions it is as low as 3 per cent., or 4 per cent., and, in at least one battalion, not a single man has extended during the last month.

WANT OF EMPLOYMENT FOR MEN AFTER DISCHARGE.

One of the great difficulties of enlisting men for a long period of service is that of finding employment for them on their discharge. It is not desirable, in the public interest, to allow many men to serve twenty-one years for a pension, but undoubtedly the absence of any certain prospect at the end of a soldier's career with the colours does prevent many men from enlisting. The present system has a tendency to confine recruiting to men who are either reckless or improvident. It is most desirable, both in the interests of the Army and of the public, that every man enlisting for a long term of service should be practically certain that employment will be found for him at the end of his term, provided he has conducted himself properly while serving.

LINKED BATTALIONS.

Under the existing system the battalions abroad are supplied with drafts from their corresponding linked battalions at home. The working of this scheme depends upon there being exactly the same number of battalions abroad as there are at home. But the doctrine has now become accepted that the Regular Army is primarily maintained for action over-sea, hence it has become impossible to expect that there will be the prescribed equality in the future. At present the number of battalions abroad is in excess of that at home, and the result has been to create the greatest confusion in the organisation of the infantry. This interference with the fundamental basis of the existing system has been frequent in the past, and must necessarily become permanent in the future. The confusion and inconvenience which are felt now must increase.

THE ABSENCE OF ANY ORGANISATION FOR IMMATURE SOLDIERS LEFT BEHIND ON MOBILISATION.

When the Army was mobilised in 1899-1900, very large numbers of immature soldiers were left behind. The number amounted to many thousands. It soon appeared that there

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was no organisation to meet their case. The boys were without officers, were not attributed to any existing units, and until they were actually dispatched as drafts to the battalions in the field, had practically no military value.

By a practice which cannot but be regarded as altogether illegitimate, no less than 18,000 of these boys who had been left behind as unfit to go to the front with their own battalions, were actually attached to Militia battalions and were eventually sent out to South Africa with those units, which were made up for the most part of men even more unfit than the Line recruits themselves. It is obviously most desirable that such a condition of things should not recur.

REGIMENTAL DEPOTS.

The existing regimental depots are the fifth wheel of the coach. They have a certain value as mobilisation centres and storehouses, but they have no military value whatever. On the contrary, their existence is most detrimental to military efficiency. They are, as a rule, commanded by officers who expect no further command, and therefore lack ambition. The junior officers attached to them are not, and cannot be, selected because they are peculiarly qualified as instructors of young soldiers.

The routine in the depots is most depressing, and in some cases quite inadequate. The mixing up of Line and Militia recruits is bad for both forces. The scale on which the depots are established prevents their being made attractive. They are without bands, they are without proper gymnasia, the recreation-rooms are dispiriting and ill-adapted to their purpose: in a word, nothing can be more disheartening than the time spent by a recruit in one of these quite unnecessary depots. They lack every quality which a good depot should possess, and they perform no useful function.

THE GUARDS.

It is a recognised part of our system that the Brigade of Guards shall have special privileges and advantages. The principle has long been accepted, and there seems no reason why it should be abandoned. At the present time, however, the Guards have practically ceased to possess any special privilege, and in consequence the Brigade has ceased to attract recruits. The three years' service is now common both to the Guards and to the Line. Foreign service is often an attraction, rather than a disadvantage, in the eyes of the soldier. The

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Guards get no foreign service in peace time. The duties of the Guards are far heavier than those of the Line battalions at home, hence the recruiting for the Guards has fallen off to a very serious degree. It has been found necessary to reduce the establishment of battalions to 650, and there is no certainty that the decline in the recruiting will be arrested at an early date.

THE DISREPUTABLE CONDITION OF THE BARRACKS.

The present system is supposed to be a territorial system, but for the most part is mere make-believe. The one district in which a territorial regiment is scarcely ever to be found is its own district. The consequence is that much of the local goodwill which would be extended to a territorial regiment, if it were a reality, finds no object on which to expend itself.

Under the present system, when an Infantry battalion leaves its barrack in the United Kingdom every man in the battalion knows that, in all human probability, he will never enter that barrack again; he also knows that whatever may be the state of the barrack he will be charged barrack damages. He perhaps not unnaturally endeavours "to get value for his money," and even if he does not intentionally damage the quarters he is leaving, he takes no pains whatever to make them beautiful or leave them neat. It is nobody's business or interest to contribute towards the comfort of the soldier while he is in a particular barrack; the regiment is not in its territorial district, and even if it were, its short sojourn there would make it unreasonable for well-wishers in the district to spend their money upon improvements which would be destined to benefit some regiment other than that for which they were intended. It is obviously most desirable that this state of things should not continue.

THE SCARCITY OF JUNIOR OFFICERS.

The War Commission has called attention with very great force and justice to the value of the "professional officer" in time of war. The resources of the Empire are capable of supplying an almost unlimited number of competent and willing men, but even the best men thus furnished are of comparatively little value unless they are under the orders of thoroughly trained officers.

Something has already been done by the War Office in the direction of creating a Reserve of Officers, but this reserve is

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admittedly inadequate ; and though additional proposals are under consideration, no satisfactory progress has yet been made towards obtaining an adequate supply.

THE CONDITION OF THE MILITIA.

The Militia, which has been a force of great importance and value, is rapidly dwindling away. During the last two years the falling off in the strength of the Militia has been as follows:—

Numbers wanting to complete establishment :

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| January 1st, 1902 | . | . | . | . | . | 21,148 |
| „ 1903 | . | . | . | . | . | 20,596 |
| „ 1904 | . | . | . | . | . | 32,601 |

There is no sign that the fall will be arrested. Moreover, the Militia is undoubtedly deficient in quality as well as in quantity, and every year the rate of decay is likely to be accelerated, for a battalion which once loses prestige goes rapidly down hill.

The decay in the Militia is the natural and inevitable consequence of the way in which that force has been treated. It has been regarded solely as a convenience for the Line. Line sergeants have employed their time in skimming the cream of the Militia recruits out of the depots ; militiamen have been encouraged by bounties to leave their battalions for the Line ; the Militia battalions have been made a convenient stepping-stone for officers entering the Line, and these officers have been taught to regard the Militia, not as a force to which they belong, but as one in which they are compelled for a short period to serve.

The Militia is not organised in such a way as to make it of real value for home defence and, under its present constitution, Militia battalions cannot be compelled to go abroad in time of war. As a matter of fact, battalions generally volunteer for war service, but the process by which they are induced to do so is unsatisfactory, and their services in the field are not as valuable as they ought to be.

It is essential, therefore, that the question of the Militia should be taken in hand at once, and a method devised by which the officers and men who now go into the Militia may be utilised for the service of the country, in connection with the territorial and localised Army, in such a way as to develop their capacity to the utmost, to encourage them in their work, and to ensure their efficiency.

THE AUXILIARY FORCES.

The whole question of the Auxiliary Forces merits careful attention, in view of the recent Report of the Royal Commission on the Militia and Volunteers.

The statements made in the Report are most serious. We are told with respect to the Militia—

That “as regards the Infantry, there is a consensus of opinion both among Militia officers and those regular officers who have had special opportunities of observation, that the average Militia battalion would not be fit to take the field, except after several months’ continuous embodiment.”

That “the training of the Militia officer is inadequate to enable him properly to lead troops, and especially incompletely trained troops.”

That “the force is imperfectly equipped for war.”

That “the Militia in its existing condition is unfit to take the field for the defence of this country.”

Nor is the account of the Volunteers more satisfactory. We are told—

That “there is no divisional organisation, nor are any arrangements made for the command and staffs of the large masses of Volunteers of the various arms told off to the defence of London, beyond the grouping of the Infantry in brigades.”

That “the units of Volunteers are of various establishments and strengths. Such differences render difficult the proper grouping into the larger formations required for service in the field.”

That “the Volunteer Field Artillery lacks the requisite training and mobility.”

That “the transport, equipment, and artillery matériel of the Volunteer Force are far from satisfactory.”

That “taking the Force as a whole, neither the musketry nor the tactical training of the rank and file would enable it to face, with prospect of success, the troops of a Continental army.”

That “an appreciable number of Volunteers classed as efficient are physically unfit for service in a mobile army.”

That the inequality in the attainments of the officers “prevents the Volunteer Force from acquiring the cohesion needed for war.”

That "*in view of the unequal military education of the officers, the limited training of the men, and the defects of equipment and organisation,*" the Volunteer Force "*is not qualified to take the field against a regular army.*"

II

It is absolutely necessary that the state of things here described should cease to exist. The evils which have been enumerated above are clear and specific ; so also is the evil of excessive cost.

The Army Estimates for the current year amounted to £28,900,000. This figure was only arrived at in consequence of its being possible to make a diminution in the normal charges for this particular year. This diminution was effected by giving the first supply of the new field gun to India, a measure which was perfectly right in itself, but which will not prevent a heavy additional cost for re-armament coming upon the Estimates in future years.

Then, again, the interest due on the Annuities raised in respect of the Military Works Loan are charged upon Estimates, and the amount under this head increases automatically every year. Next year it will be £182,000 more than it was this year.

Again, the fact that large amounts of stores which were surplus at the close of the South African War were available during the current year, relieved the Estimates ; but in future it will be necessary to replace stores which had not to be replaced this year.

Again, the Reserve is at present very much depleted. As it grows, more money will have to be devoted to pay the reservists. In fact, whoever is Minister for War, and whatever system exists, there must be a large automatic increase in Army Estimates, and any actual reduction of Estimates can only begin when this addition is wiped off.

But the country wishes to see this addition wiped off, and a great economy made also. The country is right, but it must be clearly understood that "he who wishes the end wishes the means." It is of no use to say there must be great reductions in army expenditure, if everybody concerned resolutely refuses to accept any reduction in those items which involve expenditure.

What is it that makes our great Army expenditure necessary ? There can be but one answer. It is the number of men we employ.

In the Navy it is the Shipbuilding Vote that is the principal item of cost. In the Army it is the number of men that governs all other Votes. If we want to spend less money we must have fewer men.

Can we spend less money with fewer men? Undoubtedly we can. It is not commonly realised that this country at present maintains no less than 213,010 men, to whom must be added the Army in India, 77,402 men, the Indian Army, 156,870 men, and various Colonial and Foreign Office contingents making a total of 18,233 men. If to these we add the Reserves, 73,597 men,¹ we get the total 539,112.

It must not be forgotten that, in addition to this great number, we also maintain 126,673 men on the peace establishment of the Navy, and the Naval Reserves, amounting to 46,051 men.

Is this enormous number of troops (539,112) necessary?

If the British Fleet be efficient, clearly it is not necessary. The Admiralty are of opinion that, while they cannot guarantee this country against "raids," they can guarantee it against serious invasion. If the Admiralty are right, then we need not maintain an army for home defence capable of resisting serious invasion. If the Admiralty are wrong, then no army we can maintain will be sufficient to protect us from hostile attack. If we have command of the sea, we can prevent any invading army landing. If we have not command of the sea, it will not be necessary for an enemy to land: he can starve us into submission.

It is evident, therefore, that the Army we want is an army which will enable us to maintain our Empire across the sea in peace and in war, and which will enable us to resist raids at home attempted in the absence of the fleet.

It is to create such an army that our efforts ought to be directed. Obviously, the Army which we now have is not the one we require, for it includes over 400,000 men who are not bound to go abroad, and the majority of whom are not required for defence at home.

III

With these facts before us, let us see whether a remedy can be provided for the evils that exist. The following steps are proposed:—

(1) To divide the Regular Army into two parts, *viz.*, a General-Service Army and a Home-Service Army.

¹ On the basis of six years' Reserve service, and no Second-Class Reserve.

The General-Service Army will serve both abroad and at home in time of peace and in time of war.

The Home-Service Army will serve at home in peace, and abroad, if necessary, in time of important war.

The men who serve abroad must enlist for a comparatively long service. The men who serve at home are required to form a Reserve ; therefore their service must be short.

GENERAL SERVICE ESTABLISHMENT.

Under the present linked-battalion system, the Army abroad can only be properly supplied if the number of battalions abroad and at home is the same. But this is an unsound principle.

It has already been shown that we do not require the same number of General-Service battalions at home as we do abroad. On the other hand, a certain number of General-Service battalions must be maintained at home, in order that the whole of a man's service may not be foreign service.

Nothing was more clearly demonstrated in the last war than the necessity for a "Striking Force" ; that is to say, a small force of all arms ready to proceed to the front at the shortest notice without mobilisation.

It is proposed under the new scheme to establish such a force, which will be complete in all arms, and which will be quartered at Aldershot.

We have now to consider whether the existing battalions of the Regular Army are sufficient in number to provide for ordinary peace service abroad and to supply the proportion of General-Service battalions at home which is necessary to secure a proper circulation and to furnish a striking force. As a matter of fact, the units of the Regular Infantry will suffice for all these requirements and leave a considerable margin over. It is therefore proposed to keep the requisite number of battalions of Regular Infantry for the general service abroad and at home, the term of service being six months at a depot, and eight years and six months with the colours, followed by three years in the First-Class Reserve. This is the term which is actually served by a very large number of men at present in the Army. Recruiting for these battalions will be restricted to men of nineteen years of age and upwards.

In order to get rid of the necessity for having a battalion at home for every battalion abroad, it is proposed to establish large depots. The system of small depots has been a signal

failure; the system of large depots has been a great success. The Guards, the Royal Artillery, the Royal Marine Artillery, the Royal Marine Light Infantry, the bluejackets and the stokers of the Navy, are all furnished from large depots. It is therefore proposed to establish large depots for the General-Service battalions.

It must not be supposed, however, that this involves the abandonment of the very valuable features of the "Linked-Battalion System," which originally commended it to the Army and to the public. The linking of the battalions for the purposes of exchange of officers and men is good, and should be retained. The rigid linking of battalions in pairs, for the purposes of furnishing drafts, will be abandoned.

It will be necessary to provide sufficient battalions to keep up a proper circulation between the battalions abroad and at home. At present there are no less than 87 battalions abroad, but it is to be hoped that in time some of these may be withdrawn. In proportion as they are withdrawn it will be possible to reduce the number of General-Service battalions at home. But it will be asked on what principle it is proposed to select the battalions for service abroad and to fix the number. The answer is that the number must be determined by the circumstances of the time.

But, as has already been pointed out, whatever arrangement is arrived at, there will be a certain number of Line battalions which will not be required for general service, at home or abroad, in time of peace. What is the proper course to pursue with regard to these battalions? It would be a very unwise thing to blot out ancient battalions of the Line which have a great and honourable history. Whatever changes may be made, these battalions must be preserved. Clearly no one would wish to see the 100th Royal Canadians or the 93rd Highlanders abolished, and there is no intention whatever of abolishing them. Are there, however, any battalions of the Line which have not this long and distinguished history? The answer is "Yes." There are fourteen battalions which were raised during the last few years, and which form the 3rd and 4th battalions of certain famous regiments. There are also five Garrison battalions which were raised during the late war. It is proposed that these battalions should, in process of time, be absorbed. This will leave us with a certain number of battalions of the Line which are not required, in peace time, for service abroad. What course ought to be taken with regard to these battalions?

HOME-SERVICE ESTABLISHMENT.

These battalions will be utilised for the Home-Service Establishment. Excluding the Guards, there will be about forty battalions, more or less, of these, and it is proposed that the term of service in these battalions shall be two years with the colours, including three months at a depot, followed by six years in the First-Class Army Reserve. The men will be recruited from eighteen years of age upwards.

The peace strength of these battalions will be 500, of whom 400 will be men serving two years at the depot and with the colours, and the remaining 100, principally the staff, will be either general-service men supernumerary to the General-Service battalions, or general-service reservists who have concluded their service with the colours. There will be twenty officers permanently attached to each battalion. These will be fully commissioned officers of the Regular Army, interchangeable with the general-service officers, and available for service in any part of the world.

The low peace strength of these battalions means a very great expansion on mobilisation. The men for this will be furnished by the very large Reserve which will accumulate on the two years' service. But officers are even more important, and the lack of a Reserve of Officers was one of the gravest defects revealed by the South African War. In addition to the twenty officers permanently with each battalion, there will be attached to each battalion ten Reserve officers. These will have had to serve for a fixed period with the colours, and have passed certain prescribed examinations. They will come up periodically for training, and their position will closely resemble that of the present Militia officers.

The rank and file of the home-service infantry reservists, together with the Reserve officers and non-commissioned officers, will be called up for training in the second and fourth year following their discharge from the colours. This is absolutely essential, in view of the shortness of their service with the colours. The position of these reservists is, however, not thereby made less attractive than that of the present First-Class Army Reserve, for they will be free from the liability of being called out at any moment for war purposes, except in the case of a really great national war.

The Home-Service Army is, as far as possible, to be really territorialised. Battalions will serve in their own district, will always have the same barracks assigned to them, and their furthest move in peace will be to the nearest training

ground, or to Aldershot or Salisbury Plain in the case of certain battalions taken in rotation for a period of training.

The Home-Service Army thus provided by the surplus battalions of the present Regular Army will, on mobilisation, furnish a considerable force for the purpose of reinforcing the General-Service Army in a great war over-sea; but the force will be none too large for our possible requirements. Moreover, the number of units in the Home-Service Army thus established is insufficient to furnish a territorialised unit for each of the existing districts.

The best way of meeting this deficiency would probably be to absorb a certain number of selected Militia battalions into the Home-Service Territorial Army, bringing them up, both as regards officers and men, to the standard of the other short-service battalions. It would thus be possible to assign to each of the territorial districts one short-service reservist-creating battalion, either Regular or Militia in its origin, which would be the real military centre of the district. The objects aimed at by Lord Cardwell in his Territorial Scheme, but hitherto only very imperfectly secured, owing to the difficulties connected with the proper distribution and reliefs of the Army, would thus be realised. At the same time a reinforcing army of some 100,000 men (including the Guards) would be provided for the emergencies of a great war.

But however desirable on general grounds, there are serious practical objections to such a proposal for the absorption of Militia battalions into the Territorial Army, an absorption which, for financial reasons, would necessitate the reduction or abolition of the remaining Militia battalions, and any such change can only be made with the full concurrence of Parliament and the support of public opinion.

THE MILITIA.

The case of the Militia is, in fact, a peculiar one. Undoubtedly on general military grounds there is very little to be said for the duplication of the Home-Service Territorial Army by another territorial army of still shorter service, competing with it for recruits. The facts already given show that the Militia cannot be said to be an efficient fighting force. It has long ceased to play the important part it once played in our polity. The old class of officers and the old class of men who composed the "Constitutional Force" have, for the most part, disappeared. It consists, to no small extent, of two classes: those who are

not yet fit for the Line and are preparing themselves for the Line at Government expense, and those who never will be fit for the Line or for any military purpose whatever.

When economy is so earnestly and universally demanded, when it is conceded that economy can only be attained by reducing the men maintained, beginning with the least efficient, why should not the Militia be entirely absorbed into the Territorial Army? Because the popular sentiment against so complete a change is at present too strong. That sentiment is fully justified by the national importance and constitutional standing of the Force, and a change of the magnitude suggested can only come about after much fuller public discussion than has yet been given to it.

No sweeping change, therefore, in the general position of the Militia Force or in the strength of its units is at present contemplated.

But the Militia cannot be left in its present unsatisfactory condition. Prompt measures must be taken to improve it, so as to make it a more serviceable fighting force. The physical standard will be brought up to that of the Line—already far lower than could be wished—and the period of training lengthened in accordance with the proposals of the Duke of Norfolk's Commission. At the same time the Secretary of State proposes to take into consultation representative officers of the Force in order to discuss any further changes that might with advantage be introduced.

THE REGULAR FORCES.

To return to the actual proposals that will be brought forward with regard to the Regular Forces, there will be large depots for the Home-Service Army, as for the General-Service Army. They will be distributed in accordance with the Decentralisation Scheme which is being worked out on the general lines of the proposals of Lord Esher's Committee.

The main difference between the proposed system and the one at present existing is that it endeavours to differentiate the Army according to the varying functions it has to perform in peace and in war, to provide the number of troops required for each purpose, and no more, and to adapt the terms of service more closely to the needs and interests of the men who, under a voluntary system, must be induced, and cannot be forced, to enlist in it. The existing system, on the other hand, attempts to combine the two entirely dissimilar functions of the policing of the Empire in peace and the prosecution of small wars, and the conduct of a serious

campaign requiring mobilisation on a large scale, under one and the same inelastic period of service. It does not offer enough opportunity to the man who wishes to make soldiering his profession, and it asks too much of the man who may want to serve for a short period and then return to civil life. For the rigidity of the linked-battalion system, so contrary to all the dictates of strategy, the proposed changes will substitute the far more flexible system of a General-Service Army, where even the fixed proportion between the battalions abroad and those at home, however desirable for purposes of circulation, is not so vital as to paralyse the whole working of the system should it at any time be temporarily suspended or altered.

On the other hand, where fixity is really required, as in territorialisation, the proposed system secures through the Home-Service Establishment the reality of that which, under the existing system, has been, and was bound to be, a sham. The new system provides both a Striking Force available at any moment and a large total force on mobilisation. By adding from 1,000 to 2,000 officers to the present establishment,¹ and creating a Reserve of Officers, it will enable a far greater proportion of the men available on mobilisation to be really utilised in the shape of a field force, while at the same time providing *cadres* for the training of those who are left behind and for recruits enlisted after the outbreak of war.

The organisation of the Brigade of Guards will remain practically unaltered both as regards strength and as regards the period of Colour and Reserve service; but to maintain the position and popularity which the Guards enjoyed till quite recently, certain increases are necessary. The general extension of the three-year system to the whole Army has undoubtedly prejudiced the recruiting for the Guards. The remedy proposed consists of an increase in their rates of pay. An addition of 2*d.* will be made to the daily pay of the Guards prior to extension, making the total 1*s.* 3*d.* instead of 1*s.* 1*d.* as at present. If at any time after two years they agree to extend for the whole period of eight years, they will immediately receive the full-service pay. Their pay will thus, corresponding to their conditions of service, come midway between that of the General-Service and Home-Service Armies. The depot arrangements of the Brigade will remain as at present.

¹ The incorporation of 35 Militia battalions with the Home-Service Army would provide 1,050 trained officers.

ROYAL HORSE AND FIELD ARTILLERY.

It is proposed to deal with the Artillery on the same principles as with the Infantry. Of the existing 179 batteries, 100 batteries, including all the Horse Artillery, will be assigned to general service and will be maintained at an average strength of 100 men per battery. The remaining 79 batteries will be placed on the Home Establishment, and will produce the bulk of the reservists for the Artillery. These batteries will only have 4 guns horsed, and will be on a peace establishment of 5 officers and 97 men, of whom 38 will be general-service soldiers.

These 79 batteries will be sufficient for the Home-Service Establishment, and there will therefore be no need to transform any of the existing Militia Artillery batteries or companies in order to make up the required establishment.

A reorganisation of the Garrison Artillery is also required. But the problem is one involving peculiar difficulties, and pending a fuller working out of the question by the Army Council, no proposals for change will be brought forward for the present.

ROYAL ENGINEERS.

No proposals will be submitted for the present with regard to the Royal Engineers. The recruiting for the corps has offered no difficulties, and though eventually it will be necessary to apply to the Royal Engineers the same system which it is proposed to apply to the Infantry, the matter is not one calling for immediate action.

THE CAVALRY.

The Cavalry arm stands on a special footing, and therefore demands special treatment. Its peace establishment is small, and recruiting offers no difficulties. The organisation, however, is faulty, and changes are under consideration with the view of improving it and doing away with the existing system of linked regiments.

NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND THE EMPLOYMENT OF
SOLDIERS ON DISCHARGE.

As the battalions of the Home-Service Army will consist mainly of men with under two years' service, it is obvious that a large number of warrant and non-commissioned officers will

be required for them who cannot be created, in the ordinary course, by promotion within the battalions. It is proposed to make the necessary appointments from those men who, after nine years' colour service in the General-Service Army, desire to obtain further employment, instead of going into the Reserve, or from ex-reservists who are no longer liable to service.

To ensure that they shall possess the qualities required in those who are charged with instructing young soldiers, it will probably be necessary to establish a Non-Commissioned Officers' School in which they will receive instruction before taking up their appointments.

There will be a very large number of appointments thus available in the Home-Service Army. Adding to those the staff of the depots, both General- and Home-Service, and the staffs of the Auxiliary Forces, and taking into consideration the fact that the annual overflow of men from the General-Service battalions into the Reserve will be small, it will be seen that the arrangement contemplated will go far towards supplying reasonable certainty of employment for the soldier who has served his time.

THE VOLUNTEERS.

It is the accepted policy of the Government that the Regular Army, General- and Home-Service alike, is maintained principally for service over-sea. The defence of these islands against hostile raids must therefore be left very largely to the Volunteers. The efficiency of the Force becomes therefore a far more important consideration than it has hitherto been, and is more important than its mere numerical strength. That strength, which on the 1st January, 1904, was 241,000—though 100,000 short of the establishment of 347,075—is actually in excess of the requirements, though nobody can contend that the efficiency of the Force is in excess of what is required for war. A reduction of the numbers and an increase in the efficiency are obviously indicated.

It is proposed to reduce the establishment of the Volunteers to 200,000 and the present strength to 180,000; in other words, to reduce the Force by one-fourth. The corps composing these 180,000 will be divided into two classes, corresponding to the two classes of officers and men that exist at present in every Volunteer battalion—*viz.*, those who are willing and able to give a good deal of time to their drill and training, and those who are willing, but unable, to do so.

The Force on the higher scale of organisation will have its

full complement of officers, be supplied with necessary transport, and be organised into the higher field formations in association with Yeomanry, Artillery, and Engineers. A higher standard of efficiency than the present one will be exacted; but there will also be a higher grant.

From the remaining 120,000 a lower standard of efficiency will be required. The money expended on these will be reduced from an average of £7 per head to £5.

It may be desirable in the future to increase the actual strength to 200,000, but in no case should the proportion of men in the second category exceed those in the first by more than two to one.

On the outbreak of war there will be no difficulty in doubling the strength of the properly organised and well-officed *cadres* of the Volunteers in the first category by accepting the services of men whose obligations confine them to the second category in time of peace, but who would gladly give up the whole of their time in the event of war. The remaining Volunteers, in their turn, could rapidly be brought up to a higher level of efficiency.

There is a considerable demand for Rifle Clubs, which it seems only reasonable to encourage. It is therefore proposed to give to ex-Volunteers sufficient free ammunition to allow of their going through their class firing, on joining a recognised rifle club, and to supply ammunition at cost price to members of such clubs. It is proposed to set aside a sum of £50,000 per annum for this purpose.

IV

Summarising the above statement, it will be observed that if the proposals now made be carried into effect, the following evils will be specifically dealt with, and, it is hoped, remedied :

1. The organisation of the forces of the Empire for war will be improved and our system co-ordinated as the result of the establishment of the Committee of Imperial Defence, presided over by the Prime Minister, attended by the representatives of the various great departments concerned, and furnished with a permanent and adequate staff.

2. The organisation of the War Office will be put upon a more satisfactory basis, and greater amount of decentralisation than has hitherto been possible will be introduced into the administration of the Army.

3. The Intelligence Branch and the organisation of the Staff of the Army will be greatly improved. The number

of officers employed will be increased, and the work of the department will be better distributed than heretofore.

4. The linked-battalion system will be retained for the purposes of exchange, but abolished for the purposes of drafting.

5. It will be no longer necessary to maintain an exact correspondence between the number of units abroad and at home, a correspondence absolutely unsuited to modern conditions.

6. It will no longer be necessary to leave behind large numbers of men on mobilisation, but the General-Service battalions will be composed of fighting men, and will have an adequate reserve.

7. Organisation will be provided for all reservists who are not called out with their regiments at the outbreak of war.

8. The uncertainty which has hitherto done so much harm to the reservists will no longer exist. The home-service reservist will know that he will only be called out in the extremity, and when the country is engaged in a great struggle.

9. The general-service infantryman will receive high pay, and will receive it directly he is qualified, instead of having to wait two years.

10. The home-service infantryman will serve at home under agreeable conditions, and at the end of that time will have the option of going abroad if he wishes to do so, or of going into the Reserve if he prefers that course.

11. In addition to the large amount of employment which is already found for the general-service soldier on discharge, a supply of very congenial employment will be furnished for all those who accept appointments as non-commissioned officers in the Home-Service battalions.

12. The falling off in the recruiting of the Guards will be arrested, because the Guards will again receive a small advantage, to which they are entitled owing to their additional length of service.

13. A Striking Force, for which the necessity was so clearly demonstrated at the commencement of the late war, will be provided.

14. A great improvement in barrack accommodation will be possible, because battalions will continue to occupy the same barracks.

15. An improvement will be made in the organisation of the Cavalry which will allow of the supply of recruits from depots, and will obviate the necessity which at present exists of linking Cavalry regiments in pairs.

16. There will be an improvement of the Militia, and, if public opinion will allow, the amalgamation of the Militia with the Line for the purpose of forming a true Territorial Army.

17. A great improvement in the Volunteers :

(a) The discharge of ineffective and useless men.

(b) The granting of additional funds for those Volunteers who can give time for additional service.

(c) The easing of the terms of service to those Volunteers who are unable to comply with the extreme requirements of the War Office.

(d) Generally, the creation of a true Volunteer Army capable of expansion to almost any degree in case of war.

18. Assistance to Rifle Clubs. In other words, help to those who desire to serve the country, but who have not leisure or opportunity to enter the Army or the Volunteers.

19. A contribution towards the expense of furnishing a Volunteer Transport, a most important element in time of war.

20. All the historical battalions of the Line will be maintained intact.

21. Every existing battery of Royal Artillery will be maintained.

22. The Infantry force for the first time will be truly localised, and the regiments will, for the most part, live in their own counties.

23. The three-years system will be abolished.

24. The men will enlist for two years, or for a longer term.

25. The War Office will no longer be dependent for its general-service soldiers upon the caprice of boys, who may or may not decide to extend.

26. The Reserve will no longer be a substitute for, but will become a supplement to, the men serving.

27. A large number of thoroughly trained junior officers will be added to the Army.

28. An opportunity will be given to country gentlemen who cannot give up their whole time to Army service to enter the Line regiments, to train with them in peace time, and to serve with them continuously in time of war.

29. The cost of the Army will be greatly reduced.

H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER.

APPENDIX III

EXTRACTS FROM SPEECHES MADE BY THE AUTHOR, 1902—1905

THE following pages contain a series of extracts from speeches made by the author in the House of Commons during 1904-5. They are of some interest as showing that many of the problems which are now justly occupying public attention are not being considered for the first time under a régime which claims the monopoly of "Clear Thinking."

It is the misfortune of a Secretary of State for War, especially a Secretary of State for War who is compelled by circumstances or by conviction to advocate reforms in the constitution of the Army, to be compelled to address himself to a very limited, and usually to a not very friendly, audience. Interest in Army matters in the House of Commons is for the most part confined to matters connected with the rates of wages in the Government factories and to details concerning individuals who belong to, or are interested in, the Auxiliary Forces. Discussions on the Army as a whole and as a fighting machine are exceedingly rare, and, when they take place, interest but a very small number of members. Nevertheless, despite these somewhat discouraging circumstances, it is the duty of a Secretary of State for War to endeavour to explain to Parliament, and through Parliament to his country, what is the policy of his Government and of his Department, and to furnish explanations in the plainest possible terms. The extracts which follow represent the attempt which was made by the Secretary of State for War during the years 1904-5 to perform this part of his duty.

THE ARMY AND PARTY POLITICS.

I have heard once or twice in the course of debate an aspiration with which I cordially sympathise—that Army discussions might be outside the lines of party differences.

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How far that ideal is from being realised only those can understand who have been present, as I have been compelled to be present, during the whole of the debates on Army matters in the present session. I have no hesitation in saying that a great part of those debates was devoted to matters which, though they were of relative importance, were absolutely unimportant compared with the great issues that are at stake. I do not deny for a moment that there are hon. members from whom I may differ who do occasionally come into contact with the realities of the situation, who do recall the fact that we are dependent for our national existence to a large extent upon the well-being of our Army and its maintenance in a condition which fits it for war. But these were rare intervals in the debate, which otherwise was composed almost entirely of mere details, of innuendoes and small matters of party differences which had practically no reference whatever to the real question of the Army.

(28.3.05, p. 67.)

THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF THE ARMY PROBLEM.

Let hon. members remember that this is not a problem with which I am personally called upon to deal, and from which they are exempt. My problem is their problem. It is the problem of every Ministry that will ever sit in this House. My difficulties will be their difficulties. I am not going to prophesy—that would be a far too presumptuous thing to do—but I venture to express a belief that when this problem is studied in the light of modern conditions, as I have been compelled to study it, those who are called upon to deal with it will substantially come to the same conclusion that I have come to; that they will be guided, as I have been guided, I trust, by one thought alone—that is, the necessity for providing an army with one qualification, and one only, namely, fitness for war and fitness to succeed in war.

(28.3.5, p. 698.)

If we are really in earnest in trying to get this matter right, and in trying to get an army suitable to our needs, do not let it end in abuse, do not let it end in merely pointing out that this man or that man is incompetent. Let it end in some concrete, positive suggestion. Let it end, if possible, in some agreement between the parties who are responsible for the government of this country. Nothing will be gained, I am perfectly certain, by confining our discussions on Army matters to purely personal or party disquisitions.

(28.3.5, p. 696.)

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A COMMITTEE OF DEFENCE REQUIRED.

I cannot but reaffirm the belief I held before I stood at this table, and since I have stood here, that there is a need for some reinforcement of the intellectual equipment which directs, or ought to direct, the enormous forces of our Empire. I adhere to all I have said as to the value, even in their not wholly developed form, of the Intelligence Departments of our two great Services. But I feel that these questions, which are, and must be, outside the purview of either of those bodies acting independently, cannot be dealt with even by the highest officers in either of the Services, or even by the highest political intelligences, merely by preliminary or casual examination. We have learnt the lesson—it is an accepted axiom—that in almost every branch of the application of mind to matter, before we can adequately deal with the practical application of enormous forces, we must make a study of those forces and of the laws which govern them. The study cannot be made as a mere accident of professional life. There are great officers who have served, and are serving, this country enormously to its advantage. They have devoted their great powers to the special avocations and duties which they have been performing, but many of them, and, indeed, I may say the great majority of them, have not been called upon to specialise in the study of this exceedingly complicated problem of the defence of the Empire, and the preparation and utilisation of its great resources in the most economical and the most efficient manner.

I should be false to myself if I were to deny that I believe there is room for a greater amount of preparation in advance with regard to the defence of this Empire. I am not at all sanguine that we can improvise in a month, or a year, or five years, or even in ten years, an organisation which will enable us to do all that we ought to do, and all we desire to do, in this direction; but it is certain that unless and until we take the initial steps, the day of fruition will be indefinitely postponed. Feeling as I do on this subject, I need hardly say I have a great deal of sympathy and agreement with the views that have been put forward. Many of us have our own ideas as to how a commencement should be made, but until a commencement is made, we shall be no nearer to the realisation of our hopes.

(20.6.'02.)

(The author at this date filled the office of Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty.)

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THE NAVY AND THE COMMITTEE OF DEFENCE.

In the first place, there has been the enormous change which is illustrated by the expenditure upon the Navy. An hon. member of this House not very long ago interrupted me, and said, when I mentioned the Navy, that we were engaged in an Army debate. I said then, and I say now, that the interruption was typical of the absolute failure to comprehend the whole of our military problem. We have been adding million after million to our naval expenditure. Are all these millions wasted? Are they thrown away? If it be true, as we are told by representatives of the Admiralty, that the Navy is in a position such as it has never occupied before—that it is now not only our first line of defence, but our guarantee for the possession of our own islands—is that to make no difference to a system which has grown up avowedly and confessedly on the basis of defending these islands by an armed land force against an invasion? Is that to make no difference? Is this view some invention of my own imagination? No, sir; that is the deliberate conclusion of the Government, advised by a body which has been called into, I believe, a useful existence during the last eighteen months, and which I regret was not called into existence much longer ago—the Committee of Defence. (28.3.'05, p. 681.)

THE COMMITTEE OF DEFENCE.

We have instituted the Committee of Defence, over which the Prime Minister is the presiding authority, and in which the representatives of all the great departments—civil, military, Indian, and Colonial—are associated; and though I do not pretend—no one who has attended that Committee can pretend—that we have done our work, and I know the work will not be done for twenty years, because it will only be done after a long, long apprenticeship, I do say that greater progress has been made in elucidating this great problem than has been made in the twenty years that have preceded its establishment. We are seeing the light. We are not yet in possession of the full information we require. (14.7.'04.)

THE BLUE-WATER SCHOOL AND CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE SERVICES.

If there be a danger, it is more likely to be created by the Navy than by the Army. On behalf of the Department I can, I think, say that nothing would be more

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congenial to the views of the War Office than that it should be divested of the duty of controlling the naval defence of strictly naval ports. The subject is one of great difficulty, and it can only be satisfactorily solved by an agreement between the two Services, which is likely to be effected through the Committee of Defence. (14.4.'04.)

THE QUESTION OF INVASION.

The Prime Minister has already on more than one occasion given expression to his own views of the situation, and he has simply echoed what is, so far as I can ascertain, the view of every single naval and military authority of any competence whatever upon this question of invasion. He has said that the question of the invasion of these islands in such force as to inflict a fatal blow or threaten our independence is impossible. In that he speaks with the undivided and absolute authority of the Committee of Defence, and I want to know who is the hon. member who is going to question it. Who is the hon. member who is going to lay down his own authority and say, not that the present Government is wrong, but that the naval and military authorities, who, I believe, are unanimous on this subject, are wrong with regard to this question of invasion? (28.3.'05, p. 682.)

THE LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE OF NOT ACCEPTING THE "BLUE-WATER" THEORY.

Well, I am going to press this matter a little further. I am going to ask hon. members to follow out my reasoning to its logical conclusion. Is it true or untrue that this country, if the Navy be efficient, is open to an invasion in force? Because if it is, it has a very remarkable consequence. If it is open to an invasion in force, what have you to do? You will have to do what every other great country in the world which is exposed to a similar threat has had to do. You will not have to indulge in soldiering which, however excellent, is mere voluntary soldiering; to a certain extent, amateur soldiering. You will have to submit to the hard conditions other countries have had to submit to. You will have to submit to conscription. You will have to put your whole trained population into the line of battle to resist the attack of the best-trained troops in Europe. That is the logical and certain consequence of accepting the theory that an invasion in force of this country is a possibility. (28.3.'05, p. 682.)

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I say, if you accept the view that an invasion is possible, we are not playing the game of looking the facts in the face; we are trifling with the facts. We are not exempt from the dangers and difficulties which beset other nations; we have to face, under these circumstances, the same peril that Continental nations have to face, and we must face it in the same way—we must adopt the same means to combat it. No one in this House proposes that or has ever suggested it. There is no member in this House who does not know perfectly well that that is not our real danger. Suppose we eliminate for the moment that item from our consideration. Either the Navy is or is not able to defend us. If it is able to defend us, there will be, and can be, no invasion of this country. (28.3.'05, p. 683.)

THE "BLUE-WATER" VIEW.

We have had it laid down by the Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government, that the principal duty of the British Army is to fight the battles of this country across the sea. (28.3.'05, p. 684.)

LONDON DEFENCES AND THE NEW POLICY.

I think I understood the hon. member for Oldham (Mr. Winston Churchill) to ask, why have the War Office, or the Government, not found out before that the centre of gravity, so to speak, of our military structure now lies outside these Islands? I think the answer is pretty plain. The whole science of defensive and offensive warfare at sea has been revolutionised. The Navy has been more than doubled in strength. I really find it difficult to argue these points with hon. members who do not take into account the revolution in modern naval warfare; and when the hon. member for Oldham speaks, not very definitely, but rather by way of suggestion or innuendo, in condemnation of the action of the Government in altering their policy with regard to the defence of London, I wonder if he really has taken into account what has happened with regard to the defence of this country at sea. I invite the hon. member to go round that chain of fortifications outside London, and to contemplate the arrangements that were made under different conditions for the defence of London. And then I invite him to transfer his activities to Portsmouth, to Chatham, or Sheerness, and see what has been put in the place of what has been abandoned. There has been a transformation of which

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only those who have followed it closely can have any conception. That is the reason why we have, without laying ourselves open to a charge of inconsistency, shifted the centre of gravity of our military edifice from this country to abroad. (3.4.'05, p. 926.)

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER : . . . There must be a change in those orders. For example, a large number of Volunteer Artillery corps were appropriated to the fixed defences of London, but the whole of that scheme is now considered to be unnecessary. In view of the present strength and disposition of the Fleet, that arrangement is considered unnecessary, and therefore it is necessary to have a re-allocation of the Volunteer Artillery corps.

(3.8.'05, p. 2327.)

THE ARMY AND NAVY INSEPARABLE.

I now come to the question which has really occupied the whole attention of the House during these two days. I have been astonished to find that two not unimportant parts of our military forces have been almost entirely left out of sight. I dimly realised from one or two references that were made that we had a Regular Army. I did not realise, and I heard nothing to make me realise, that we had a Navy. (MR. SEELY : This is an Army debate.) That is precisely the point. It is because we will persist in discussing the Army as if it had no connection with the Navy that so many of our mistakes have been made. (23.2.'05, p. 257.)

THE LINKED-BATTALION SYSTEM.

Then I have also to face the problem of the linked battalions. The Committee of Defence, voicing, I believe, the universal opinion of all thinking men in this country, have come to the conclusion that the time has arrived when we must lay down as an axiom that the duty of the Army in this country is not primarily to stand with fixed bayonets around the coast, but to defend our possessions over-sea. What we want is an army which will hold India and our Colonies, which we can reinforce for war, and for which we must maintain the proper depots and institutions in this country. But the adoption of that view is incompatible with the existence of the linked-battalion system. (14.7.'04.)

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THE INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT.

We have in the last few weeks largely increased—we have practically doubled—our Intelligence Department. Do not let it be supposed that I think, because we have doubled the personnel of our Intelligence Department, that we necessarily have an Intelligence Department which will do all we require. I know perfectly well that the work of that department has to be learned in a very hard school. We began twenty years too late. We ought to have had that department enlarged long ago. We ought to have had those who are now entering as novices in that department apprenticed twenty years ago, and bringing the ripe fruits of their knowledge to our service at the present day. But we are doing what we can, and I believe we are moving in the right direction.

(14.7.'04.)

THE NEED FOR A GENERAL STAFF.

One of the principal recommendations was that they should create precisely this General Staff which they had so long lacked, and have a bond of union established between the two services to an extent which had never existed before.

(9.3.'04.)

THE ARMY FOR PEACE AND WAR.—THE POWER OF EXPANSION.

My view is that the logic of the situation is inexorable. If we are really to meet this demand at all, upon any sound basis, we must look at these facts. We must limit our Army which is kept on a war footing in peace time to the needs of our own peace requirements. We must have something, in addition to that Army, which will enable us to expand with great rapidity and certainty in order to fulfil the much larger demand of war when war comes. Have we any example of how that end may be achieved?

(28.3.'05, p. 686.)

THE NEED FOR ECONOMY.

I have not abandoned the view I have long entertained and often expressed, that the capacities of this country to spend money on its armaments are not infinite, and that, if we are to have a readjustment, it must be a readjustment in the

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sense of first making perfect our naval defence, even though, to some extent, we are compelled to provide on a greater scale of magnitude than other Powers. Therefore the advocates of economy will find me to be a very sympathetic listener. Of course, I have my own ideas as to the way in which economies may be best effected. I think the first rule we have got to lay down is this, that true economy exists in making a machine that will do our work, and that anything short of that is a waste of money, and that anything in excess of that is extravagance. (7.3.'04.)

REDUCTION OF EXPENDITURE.

It is much harder to justify reductions than it is to justify increases. One has to be very careful, if one is responsible for the administration of the Army, before reducing any expenditure, for this reason—that every year the responsibilities of the Army are increasing. When you increase your business, it is the normal experience of men of business that you must increase your capital; and it seems to me that no Secretary of State should present to this House, without good reason and a very clear explanation, any decrease in the normal army expenditure. Therefore I feel more called upon to explain my decreases than I do to explain my increases.

(7.3.'04.)

There has been practically a universal consensus as to the duty of reducing expenditure; but there has been an absolutely universal condemnation of any proposal to do anything which involves the reduction of expenditure. (14.7.'04.)

REDUCTION OF MEN.

He was one of those who shared the opinion that the solution of these difficulties was to be found not so much in the reduction of men as in the reduction of men on the active list; that, if they could accumulate a larger Reserve and maintain a smaller force at home, they would have done nothing to weaken the defence of the Empire, but would have made it possible to effect real and substantial economy in the cost of our military establishment. (17.3.'04.)

I am going to lay down for their consideration a proposition which I ask them to accept. We are all agreed that it is desirable to retain with the colours and with the Reserve the men who are required for the defence of the Empire, at home and abroad—and no more? That whatever is super-

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fluous should be discarded? I wonder whether my major premiss is admitted? I pause for a reply. If it is, it will carry this Committee a very long way in the direction in which I wish to take them. I am quite certain that if I do not undertake this problem somebody else will have to.

(14.7.'04.)

I have said that the policy of the Government is to adopt frankly and openly the view that this country does not require a very large army for home defence, and that it does require a larger and more efficient force for action over-sea; that it is necessary to reduce that which is redundant and inefficient in our service, independent of whatever branch of the service it belongs to; and that that must be done without fear or favour in the interests of efficiency and of economy. Those are the main outlines of the policy of the Government, and it is that policy which the Army Council is carrying out.

(8.8.'04.)

THE REDUCTION OF BATTALIONS.

But the right hon. gentleman said that you must reduce the Regular Army. That is exactly what I propose to do. I propose not to reduce units—I do not believe that is permissible—but to reduce upon the establishments and the cost of the existing units. That brings me to a remark made by the hon. member for Oldham, and echoed by the right hon. gentleman opposite, which is very significant. He said you are following a wrong line in endeavouring to make the Regular Army the basis of your territorial army; that you ought to make the Militia the basis of the territorial army. As a general principle I do not quarrel with that statement; I think less divides us than some hon. members would perhaps suppose. But I will give my reason as clearly as I can for not accepting that conclusion. If you accept it you are face to face with one of two alternatives. The question of cost will at once compel you to strike out of existence a large number of Line battalions. (Opposition cries of "Hear, hear!") I am with the hon. member with regard to a limited number of those battalions on this condition—that you replace them by something as competent as that which you destroy. But if you are to keep the whole of the regular battalions, not striking any out at all, you must put some of them on a lower establishment. Otherwise there is no diminution, and you at once have the Army Estimates up to £32,000,000 and £33,000,000. I desire to keep those batta-

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lions. I desire to maintain intact, for instance, the 93rd Highlanders; I desire to keep the whole of these historical battalions in existence. (An hon. member: What about the fourteen Line battalions?) That does not refer to the fourteen Line battalions. I think it would be possible to reduce those battalions, provided we were satisfied that fourteen other battalions as good could take their places. (3.4.05, p. 929.)

REDUCTION OF THE REGULAR ARMY.

I want the House to understand exactly their responsibility in this matter. If you are going to reduce army expenditure you must reduce those things that cause the expenditure. The Army is composed of various sections. We have the Regular Army, the Militia, and the Volunteers. We have a large aggregation of units, and we have a large aggregation of individuals. I want to know on which of these particular items it is that the House has made up its mind that we shall effect these large reductions. (MR. GUEST: "The Regular Army.") I do not know whether that is the opinion of every hon. member opposite; it is not my opinion, but I take that interruption as a warning, to those who understand the functions of the Regular Army, that there is a section of this House which demands large reductions in the Regular Army.
(28.3.05, p. 680.)

My theory is this—that we do want a large army for service over-sea; that a large part of that army should not be mobilised except in time of war; that we do not want a large army for the defence of the United Kingdom in time of war. Now, if that be so, and I find myself, as I do, with a very large army upon my hands, maintained solely for the defence of the United Kingdom in time of war, I ask whether it is not the logical, obvious sequence of that state of things that I should ask leave to reduce that army. I want to know whether that is the view the House of Commons takes, and if I am asked to reduce that army, in what direction it ought to be reduced. Surely there can be but one of two answers—reduce the ineffective part of that army. Is there any ineffective part? Undoubtedly there is. I am not dogmatising on this question from my own inner consciousness, but am simply citing the conclusions arrived at by a competent body appointed *ad hoc*, which for eighteen months has been deliberating on this question; and that body says this—that two branches of our Army are at the present moment unfit to take the field against a foreign enemy. I

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ask once more, for what purpose are these troops maintained, if they are not to take the field against a foreign enemy? What enemy are they going to take the field against? Are they to shoot down the people of Whitechapel? The thing is absurd; and I conceive that my duty, as I understand it, is to provide, in so far as in me lies, that the reproach shall not be repeated twelve months hence, or at any rate three years hence, that we are maintaining troops who are not fit to face a foreign enemy.

I find more in this particular document.

I find it stated—what, indeed, I know—that many of these troops are physically unfit for the field. We sometimes, I think, trifle with this question of war. I think I could convince all hon. members that, so far from being fit to face a foreign enemy, we have thousands of men, receiving money from this House, who would not be admitted to serve in a foreign army at all, who would be put in the intendance branch, or transport branch, out of the active ranks. That is not an exaggeration. I am sure I could prove that fact; and if that be so, is not the lesson correct that I have tried to put before the Committee—namely, that you should concentrate and reduce your force, which is notoriously redundant, and that you should increase the quality of that which you retain? (8.8.'04.)

THE REDUCTION OF FOURTEEN BATTALIONS.

It is true that I told the House of Commons that I was willing that fourteen of the most recently formed battalions, which had no great traditions, no great past, should be reduced, but on what condition? On the condition that they should be replaced at once by nineteen battalions having regular officers and all the traditions of military service. It is not an accurate representation of what I said to suggest that I desired to reduce battalions. (28.3.'05, p. 688.)

When I spoke of dispensing with the fourteen battalions it was always on condition that they should be replaced by other units available for service in India. (2.3.'05, p. 322.)

REDUCTION MUST BE GRADUAL.

Last year I said that the first rule we have to lay down is that true economy consists in making a machine to do our work, that anything short of that was a waste of money, and anything in excess of it was extravagance. I by no means

assert that our Army is perfectly adapted to our needs; and in so far as we are spending money on things we do not want, we are wasting money. It is my desire to do everything I can to produce a state of things wherein the expenditure shall be on the right thing and for the right purpose. I desire reduction of expenditure, but you cannot make great changes in six months, or perhaps in six years. The whole of our Army is serving on engagements, and when suggestions are made for disbandment, hon. members must remember that any step of the kind would immediately mean an increased cost in the Estimates for the remuneration we have to give to the men whose engagements are suddenly broken off. This process must be in all respects gradual and consistent. If we are to reduce the cost of the Army, I think I can show that there is but one way, and that is to reduce the number of men in the Army. Until you make up your minds to do that, there will be no serious reduction in the expenditure on the Army. (23.2.'05, p. 253.)

THE MILITIA AND MODERN WAR.

But we have had some lessons on this matter of late. We have had the lessons of the Japanese War: and if there is one lesson pre-eminent above all others, it is that quality, far more than quantity, is the factor which produces success in modern warfare. I am not going to stand up in this House and contend that the Militia, or any other force, will really be effective for the purposes of war unless we have in its ranks officers and men who are, in the matter of quality, in the matter of physique, in the matter of *moral*, and in the matter of training, the equivalent, and more than the equivalent, of the officers and men against whom they might possibly be employed in war. (28.3.'05, p. 696.)

THE MILITIA AND THE LINE.

I believe the Militia has long been regarded too much as an adjunct of the Line. It has had no independent existence. I believe the rule which is common to any body or corporation applies to the Militia, and that if you desire to restore it to a satisfactory condition you must make it feel that it is an all-important element in the defence of the country, that every battalion has individual existence, and that the prestige of the officer and the man in a Militia battalion is that which

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he earns for himself and for his battalion while he is in it. I believe it does not pass the wit of man to give to the Militia those conditions of service which I think are calculated to make it the force we all agree it can be made. (7.3.'04.)

There are many hon. friends of mine in this House who have belonged to the Militia who have done splendid work, and I am the last to deny that to a great extent the Militia difficulties have arisen from the unwise treatment they have received in the past. But the difficulties of the Militia are greater than that; they are inherent to the situation. So long as the Line depends upon the Militia, so long as the country districts are depleted, as they are now depleted, the Militia difficulty will remain. (14.7.'04.)

HOW TO DEAL WITH THE MILITIA.

I must tell the Committee what my own view would be with regard to the best treatment of the Militia, both in the interests of the Militia and of the Army as a fighting machine. My belief is that the proper course to take would be to give the Minister of War *carte blanche* to take some seventy battalions of the Militia, to unite each two battalions together, and to turn them into territorial battalions; to make them shake hands with the Line; to put them into the great centres of population; to make them the Herefords and the Bedfords, with their colours and their drums and traditions. (Opposition laughter.) These things are very precious to the soldier—(Ministerial cheers)—and make them the territorial battalions of this country. We should then be able to give 800 Militia officers precisely the same opportunity that they now have—that is, of coming into the trainings and going out after the trainings, being associated with their own county battalion in peace and fighting with it in time of war—and we should be able to give to 1,600 other officers the chance which most Militia officers now are seeking of passing direct into a Line battalion, of serving at home in their own counties, and in their own county towns, and with their own comrades. I believe nothing would be more popular in this country than if I were allowed to put down in each of our county towns one of these territorial battalions, which would use up the whole of the material worth anything of the officers and men in the Militia at the present time. That is what I believe is the correct solution of this Militia problem. I believe that is the real way out.

But I have not been so many years as I have in this

House without knowing that with a great national force of that kind no Minister—not even a powerful Minister, let alone a tyro like myself—can effect a change like this, unless he has with him the goodwill and conviction of Parliament and of the nation. (14.7.'04.)

THE MILITIA.

But I cannot better describe my intentions than in the words of the hon. member for Chester, which I have before me. With only one sentiment I disagree. He says: "The task is not a difficult one." I think if he sat at my desk he would know that the task is a difficult one; but this is the task—

"Make your Militia an organised territorial army to defend you against raids and supply reserves for the Regular Army in case of national emergency, raise the whole *status* of the force, give the officers a recognised position."

Now that, as far as I am concerned, is the whole duty of man in regard to the Militia; it is precisely the policy which I should desire to adopt with regard to the Militia. But I have given my pledge to the House, and that pledge has been repeated elsewhere, that no action shall be taken with regard to the Militia which is not consonant with the wishes of the Militia. (8.8.'04.)

THE VOLUNTEERS.

I come now to the Volunteers. I believe the Volunteer Force contains the best material we have in the whole Army—I speak with some experience, for I have seen the army of every European country—and if we are wise we shall make the very best use we can of that material. Whether we are making the best use of it at the present moment is a thing about which I am not quite clear. (14.7.'04.)

THE REDUCTION OF THE VOLUNTEERS.

In every Volunteer corps there are two forces pulling different ways. There are men who want to give more time, and are able to give more time, either because they are not fully occupied or because they are young; and there are those who are willing and capable soldiers, but whose avocations will not permit them to give so much time. The

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result is constant complaint against the "screwing-up," as it is called, of the War Office regulations. We desire to recognise that state of things, and what we desire to do is this. We desire to give a much larger grant to the Volunteers. We desire, with the assistance and counsel of Volunteer officers, whom we are most anxious to consult in this matter, to give effect to that separation which we know exists. Personally I should like to take 60,000 Volunteers and make them into a field army, require of them all that we think they can give, put a large grant at their disposal, and make them keep up their full complement of properly trained officers and their full complement of non-commissioned officers. I should like to put the other 120,000 upon an easier basis of requirement, retaining their connection with the Force, sharing all its social opportunities, proud of their position, and ready, I am perfectly certain, in time of war to take their place in the Force, with the experience and knowledge which they have acquired. That I believe to be the right and true solution of this Volunteer problem.

(14.7.'04.)

THE UNFITNESS OF THE VOLUNTEERS FOR WAR UNDER EXISTING CONDITIONS.

At the present moment I am confident the Volunteers are not fulfilling, to anything like the extent they ought to fulfil, the duties which the country hopes they may fulfil in time of war. I do not believe that that is to any large extent the fault of the Volunteers. I believe it is because we have not yet thought out our problems. We have not yet learned to apply the special conditions of each service to that service. We have not realised what part we want each branch of the Army to take in time of war; and until we do all these things the Volunteers will continue to be what they are now—a body capable of producing a magnificent force, but which would be misdescribed at the present time if we said it was a force of a truly military character, with a quality corresponding to its numbers, and with an organisation corresponding to the zeal and energy of those who compose it.

(7.3.'04.)

THE CONDITION OF THE VOLUNTEERS.

Of course it will be said, as it has been said, that this is driving officers out of the Force and diminishing the number of the men. Well, I should like in my own defence to tell

hon. members what the facts are on this question. This disturbing element, which is represented at the present moment by myself, has had this effect on Volunteer officers: the last year, my first complete year in office, they diminished by 14. That is the smallest reduction in the number of Volunteer officers since the war ended. The number of officers now is 1,000 more than it was in 1895. I do not think that a reduction by 14 is so vast that I ought to be charged with being a disturbing element.

Sir HOWARD VINCENT: Is the leakage not double what it was in 1898?

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER: Well, I will give the hon. member the figures I have here. The number of officers in 1898 was 8,354, the number in 1904 was 8,955. I should like now to say a word about the men. I do not think I have had a much more sinister influence on the men than I have had on the officers. The Volunteers now are 24,000 more than they were in 1899. But my hon. friend the member for Kilmarnock said truly that good men had gone out of the Volunteer Force, and I think he meant that they had gone out on account of the pressure of the camp regulations. That, to a certain very limited extent, is true. But what has happened is that the camp regulations did not drive men out of the Volunteer Force in the sense that less men went into camp last year than before. Last year we had more Volunteers under canvas than we ever had before. The fact is that no less than 175,000 men went under canvas in Volunteer camps. That cannot be taken as an absolute proof of the unpopular and dangerous nature of the regulations. But there has been a relaxation this year.

(13.7.05, p. 2028.)

THE NUMBER OF LONG-SERVICE MEN IN THE ARMY.

For years past the service of nine out of ten soldiers has been not seven but eight years. At this moment, out of the whole of the Army, no less than 155,000 men are serving for eight years and upwards, as against 111,000 men who are serving for a less period. If it be true that that service of seven years is so detrimental to the Army, we shall have to make revolutionary changes greater than those I have suggested.

(4.4.05, p. 993.)

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THE DANGER OF USING UNTRAINED TROOPS.

The overwhelming consideration is, what will be the fortune of this country if we are involved in a war at home or abroad with troops not capable of conducting that war to a successful issue and without the organisation and preparation they ought to receive to enable them to secure victory? That is my sole motive in dealing with this question.
(13.7.'05, p. 2020.)

CONSCRIPTION IN EUROPE.

I do not desire to dogmatise about this matter; my own feeling is that conscription on the Continent of Europe is becoming less and not more popular. I believe that the bow is being very tightly drawn. I do not know, and I do not wish to speak about, the view of foreign countries. But I see nothing which makes me believe that conscription is to be the accepted principle in the future. As far as my own office is concerned, I have to deal with another state of things. I have no commission at all to deal with the Army as a conscript army, still less have I got to deal with the Army as a conscript army for service in the tropics, and until I receive that commission I am compelled to follow out this problem on lines which depend on voluntary enlistment, and on that only. It is on those lines that I have attempted to deal with the problem.
(13.7.'05, p. 2057.)

THE NEED FOR CHANGE.

I confess that I do not view with equanimity the condition of the Army at the present time. I believe that, important as it is that we should have this Army Council and that we should have these changes in the constitution of the War Office, it is still more important that we should carefully examine the condition of our Army to see whether it is really capable of performing those tasks which, whatever our politics, whatever our views may be, we fear may be imposed upon it on some occasion which may be, but we all hope is not, near. We have at this moment a great asset in the number of trained soldiers in this country, but that asset will not last for ever. It is being diminished every day. I have been compelled to examine the constitution, organisation, and composition of our Army. I am not satisfied that we can continue with advantage under our present organisation, or

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that we can do it without grave risk to the fortunes of this country. (7.3.'04.)

There is another point I want to make quite clear. I want the Committee to understand that this is not a case in which a Member of Parliament, who has been, so to speak, accidentally tossed into a position of responsibility and importance, desires to signalise his arrival at that position by making a stir, by changing old things to new, and making alterations for the sake of alteration. I want them to believe, and I think I can convince them, that whoever sits on this Bench, and has this responsibility, will find confronting him exactly the same difficulties which confront me. I want them to understand that I am asking them now to listen to me, and if possible to sympathise with me, because the Army is going through a period of great danger; and if the Army is going through a period of great danger, this country is also going through a period of great danger. I am not moving for the sake of moving, but because I honestly believe that the circumstances of the case absolutely compel some change. (14.7.'04.)

POLICY AND THE PURPOSE OF THE ARMY.

Now I do not think that up to the present time, or until a very short time ago, this country did quite know what the duties were which the Army was expected to perform, and I believe that at this moment we have not that full information as to what those duties are which we hope some day to possess. But I think we are taking steps to bring professional judgment, combined with a knowledge of political exigencies, and combined with a knowledge of financial resources, to bear on the solution of this problem, and I feel that it is the duty of every Secretary of State for War, to whatever party he belongs, to put into the forefront of all his calculations this matter of the duties which the Army has to perform. It is from my conception of those duties that I regard the whole question. In these matters, in the first place it is for the professionals, and secondly for the House of Commons, to give to the War Office the necessary instruction which will allow it to proceed. (7.3.'04.)

WHAT THE ARMY IS FOR

* He would ask whether the hon. gentleman had ever heard the Army Estimates discussed with any real knowledge of what the Army had to do? They had gone on in that

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House for years discussing the Army Estimates, not only without knowing, but without attempting to find out what the business of the Army was. It was only recently that that attempt had been made, and he dated it from the formation of the Committee of Defence. He believed that more had been done in that direction since the formation of the Committee of Defence than had been done in any period that he could recollect since he had been a member of the House. One great step had been taken. The Prime Minister had laid down a policy which he believed was accepted by nine-tenths of the House as to the functions of the Army. That policy was that the functions of the Army were primarily to conduct military operations across the seas, and that we need not anticipate serious danger from an invading force so long as our Navy was kept up to its proper strength. That was an enormous contribution to the solution of the problem.

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE (Bristol, E.): We heard exactly the opposite two years ago.

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER said that the hon. Member could not have heard what he was saying. He was saying that since the Committee of Defence was formed a new and most valuable light had been thrown on the problem which the hon. and gallant member for Newington raised yesterday. He did not think that even now they knew the complete answer, though they had got nearer to that answer than before; but his own opinion was that until they had a professional staff really taught to consider, day by day and year by year, the needs and the dangers of the Empire, they would not get a final and categorical answer to the question which the hon. member asked. He hoped the hon. gentleman would go on asking it, for it was the duty of this Government and of every Government to do its best to try and get a succinct and clear answer. (9.3.'04.)

THE STOPPAGE OF BARRACK-BUILDING.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke of the heavy cost of barracks, but I may remind him that we have given effect to our promise, and have already stopped barrack-building to the extent of £1,500,000. (23.2.'05.)

With regard to the barracks on Salisbury Plain, he had stopped the construction of any further Infantry barracks there, and also at Stobs in Scotland. He thought it was undesirable, except on grounds of the strictest military necessity, to quarter troops in these unattractive localities. (14.4.'04.)

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CONSCRIPTION.

We have had the Report of the Auxiliary Forces Commission. It would be out of order if I were to discuss that Report now, and I have not the slightest intention of doing so, but I think it should be known to the House that the view of the Government—and I fully share the view of my colleagues on this matter—is that a portion of this Report is impossible of acceptance; I mean the proposal about conscription, which, if adopted, would add enormously to the expense of our Army. It is not one which can be taken seriously into consideration. (28.6.'04.)

THE EMPLOYMENT OF DISCHARGED SOLDIERS.

There is another very serious matter. Everybody knows that nothing is a greater bar to recruiting for the Army than the uncertainty of a man's obtaining employment in civil life after he has taken his discharge. That acts and re-acts throughout the whole of the Army. Do not let it be supposed that the majority of the men do not get employment. (14.7.'04.)

THE NEED FOR OFFICERS.

If any member of the Committee will ask any soldier, or consult any military work, or their own common sense, which is the best guide of all, they will find that the one thing the British Army lacks is an adequate supply of officers. We have a great Empire spread all over the world; we have 40,000,000 of people in this country; and hundreds of thousands who are ready to fight for us in an emergency. But one thing we lack, and that is the driving force for these men. We want more trained officers, and when I speak of trained officers I mean officers who have gone through the mill and know what regimental life means. (14.7.'04.)

THE ESSENTIAL CONDITION OF SUCCESSFUL WAR.

We deceive ourselves if we think we can fight the manhood of a great nation with anything less than the manhood and education of our own. (8.8.'04.)

APPENDIX IV

PARTICULARS OF THE NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS WHO PROCEEDED TO SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE WAR.

NUMBERS WHO VOLUNTEERED IN RESPONSE TO THE FIRST CALL
IN 1900.

*Extract from Report of the Inspector-General of
Recruiting for the year 1900.*

THE number who volunteered for the Infantry Volunteer Service Companies amounted to 20,929.

Of these there were rejected :

| | |
|--|--------|
| (a) For want of physique or on medical grounds . . . | 3,528 |
| (b) As not complying with the Regulations as to efficiency | 3,333 |
| Leaving fit for active service, of those who volunteered | 14,068 |

In the light of the above state of things, the following extract from Army Orders No. 92 of April, 1901, bearing reference to subsequent enlistment of Volunteers for service in South Africa, is instructive :—

“In carrying out the medical examination of candidates, which will be done by officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps, or by medical practitioners in receipt of Army pay, it should be borne in mind that it is unnecessary that they should fulfil all the conditions of fitness required of a recruit enlisting for the full term of service in the Regular Army.

“It is sufficient that the candidate should be free from organic disease or other defect likely to prevent him from doing his work during the duration of the present war.”

The total raised was 11,648, of which over 8,000 proceeded to South Africa by the middle of May; the remainder were sent out later as drafts, or belonged to the Waiting Companies, being passed temporarily to the Reserve until their services were required.

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VOLUNTEERS EMPLOYED IN SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE COURSE OF THE WAR.

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---------------|
| 1st November, 1899, to 1st January, 1901 | . | . | 14,519 |
| 1st January, 1901, to 1st January, 1902 | . | . | 9,251 |
| 1st January, 1902, to 1st July, 1902 | . | . | 3,672 |
| | | | <u>27,442</u> |

This total includes the C.I.V. and all Volunteers who joined the Imperial Yeomanry. It does not represent the number who actually *went* to South Africa, but those who were struck off the strength of the Volunteers with a view to their going out. Deducting the C.I.V. and the Volunteers who went out to join the Imperial Yeomanry, the remainder, who took part in the operations as "Volunteer Service Companies," shows a total of 19,566.

VOLUNTEERS DESPATCHED TO SOUTH AFRICA.

According to the quarterly returns of increase and decrease of the Volunteer Force prepared in A.G.-1, the numbers are as follows:—

| | Volunteer Service Companies. | Volunteer Waiting Companies. | C.I.V. | Yeomanry. | Total. |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------|-----------|--------|
| 1/11/99 to 1/1/01 . | 9,476 | 2,231 | 1,667 | 1,145 | 14,519 |
| 1/1/01 to 1/1/02 . | 5,124 | 227 | 3,900 | — | 9,251 |
| 1/1/02 to 1/7/02 . | 2,508 | — | 1,164 | — | 3,672 |
| Grand Totals . | 17,108 | 2,458 | 1,667 | 6,209 | 27,442 |

The above figures do not represent the numbers embarked for South Africa, but merely numbers (exclusive of officers) struck off in Returns of Volunteer units as having joined these forces during the above periods.

APPENDIX V

VOLUNTEER FIELD ARTILLERY

CORRESPONDENCE WITH COLONELS COMMANDING 4TH WEST RIDING
YORKS ARTILLERY VOLUNTEERS AND 1ST LANARKSHIRE ROYAL
GARRISON ARTILLERY VOLUNTEERS.

I

*Correspondence with Colonel Allen, commanding the 4th West
Riding Yorks Artillery Volunteers.*

WINGERWORTH HALL, CHESTERFIELD,
5th November, 1905.

To the Right Hon. H. O. Arnold-Forster, M.P.

DEAR MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER,

In reference to the cordial interview you were kind enough to concede to me last Wednesday afternoon for the purpose of ascertaining further information concerning the willingness of the Volunteer Artillery Corps under my command to accept additional responsibility, providing it became possible to form it into a Brigade of Field Artillery pure and simple, I gladly confirm in the most emphatic terms the assurance that whatever might be the necessary curtailment in the establishment, or additional services to be rendered by both my officers and men, you may depend upon the most earnest and loyal support to any alterations you consider needful in carrying out a scheme which will convert us into an acceptable and efficient unit of the Field Artillery branch of the Auxiliary Forces. It is really the ideal condition we have all been patiently wishing to acquire, as you will gather from the enclosed information; and I venture to repeat it will not only be received with intense enthusiasm and gratitude, but will, within a short time, produce a good brigade of field artillery, aiming to attain the same standard of proficiency as the Honourable Artillery Company.

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Whilst thoroughly appreciating the importance of this complicated subject, I am particularly anxious to avoid intruding upon your valuable time with any lengthy observations, but would ask you to kindly allow me to recapitulate in this letter the principal points to be complied with in order to carry into effect your well-conceived scheme for improving the general standard and efficiency of the Volunteer Field Artillery.

Namely, the corps to be reduced by the selection of the requisite number of officers and men necessary to constitute a brigade of field artillery from the existing personnel, retaining only those who are thoroughly efficient and physically fit for active service, and willing to comply with the additional obligations.

Every officer and volunteer retained to be enlisted for a period of not less than four years, and to join the Army Reserve and be subject to the King's Regulations.

A compulsory attendance in camp for at least fourteen days per annum, and additional drills.

Every member of the brigade to pass an annual medical inspection.

Physical drill to be a branch of the training.

Officers, non-commissioned officers, and drivers to pass riding school.

Additional facilities for any officer to be attached to the regular batteries during the active drill season.

Stable accommodation and riding school to be augmented to the satisfaction of the authorities.

Armament: 12 field guns, with complete equipment.

Personnel per battery: 1 major, 1 captain, 2 subalterns, 120 men.

In conclusion, permit me to add my personal services are always at your disposal.

Yours faithfully,
(sgd.) CHARLES ALLEN.

II

VOLUNTEER FIELD ARTILLERY.

Decision of Army Council at Sixty-ninth Meeting.

It has been decided that, subject to the training being equal to that of the Honourable Artillery Company, and to the total cost to the public of the batteries not exceeding the amount of the present grants, the proposal to convert the

4th West Riding of Yorkshire (Sheffield) Artillery Volunteer batteries into 4-gun field batteries be accepted in principle.

- (a) That the officer commanding the 4th West Riding of Yorkshire Artillery Volunteers be informed, through the Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern District, that, subject to his undertaking to fulfil the conditions as to training and enlistment to be prescribed by the Army Council, he will be permitted to train the batteries under his command as Field Artillery; that the batteries will be reduced from four 4-gun batteries to two 4-gun batteries; that the standard of efficiency to be attained is to be that of the Honourable Artillery Company, but that the period of training is to be fifteen days instead of ten days; and that the grant to the corps will remain as at present.
- (b) That the officer commanding is also to be informed that the arrangement is experimental; that the training of the batteries under his command up to the present date as field artillery is not in accordance with the Regulations; and that the continuance of the arrangement will be dependent upon his conforming, in all respects, to the conditions prescribed; and to the batteries under his command attaining the required degree of efficiency within a given time.

III

30th November, 1905.

DEAR COLONEL ALLEN,

You will, I know, be glad to hear that the Army Council has approved of your proposals, subject to some slight alterations, which do not make any material difference. The necessary orders are being drawn up, and you will in due course receive a communication from the General Officer Commanding.

I need not remind you that some of the proposals will require the sanction of an Order in Council before they can become operative, but I cannot believe that this formality will impose any difficulty, or will interfere with the accomplishment of such a desirable change.

I take leave to congratulate you upon the public spirit you have shown in submitting to the Army Council your proposals for the reorganisation of the batteries under your command. I have never had any doubt that Volunteer commanding officers in your position would make the necessary sacrifices to ensure efficiency, provided they were met on

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the part of the Army Council by an equal readiness to furnish them with the means of becoming efficient. It will, I think, be of interest to you to know that Colonel Grant, commanding the Lanarkshire Artillery, a corps occupying a position almost identical with that of your own Sheffield batteries, has informed the Army Council that he is prepared on behalf of the Volunteers under his command to accept the same conditions which you yourself have put forward, and which the Army Council, subject to the slight modifications I have alluded to, have decided to accept.

In conclusion, let me say that I am confident the recently announced decisions of the Army Council with regard to the Volunteers will meet with a favourable reception in Sheffield, for from the outset I have received nothing but sympathy and help from the Sheffield Volunteer officers. It is a satisfaction to me to think that it has now been found possible to carry into effect every principle with regard to the organisation of the Volunteers which I have insisted upon for the past two years, and that the limitation which has hitherto been imposed upon me in respect to cost, has now been so far removed that it has been possible for the Army Council to carry out the changes which I have long known to be essential without the reduction in numbers which would have been inevitable had the earlier conditions with regard to cost been insisted upon.

Believe me,
Yours truly.

IV

Copy Letter from Colonel C. Allen, commanding the 4th West Riding of Yorks Artillery (Vols.).

WINGERWORTH HALL, CHESTERFIELD,
1st December, 1905.

To the Right Hon. H. O. Arnold-Forster, M.P.,
Secretary of State for War.

DEAR MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER,

In acknowledging receipt of your courteous letter of yesterday, I do so with a feeling of deep gratitude, as I am so thoroughly convinced the decision of the Army Council in approving of the proposals concerning the corps under my command will be received with intense satisfaction, and whatever may be the conditions of the new service, they will be complied with. I shall look forward in due course to

receiving the detail communication through the General Officer Commanding the N.E. District, and then set to work to reorganise.

As the information you have kindly given me will be most interesting and gratefully received by *the whole of Sheffield*, I have taken advantage of your permission to communicate it to the local press, and it will appear in most of the newspapers.

Believe me,
Yours faithfully,
(sgd.) CHARLES ALLEN.

I

*Correspondence with Colonel Grant, M.V.O., V.D., commanding
the 1st Lanarkshire Royal Garrison Artillery Volunteers.*

16, SOUTH FREDERICK STREET, GLASGOW,
23rd Nov., 1905.

DEAR MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER,

As officer in command of the 1st Lanark R.G.A. Vols., the request, when made to me by General MacKinnon, that I should meet you at the War Office on 31st ult., was accepted with pleasure, and looked upon as an honour. As a business man, the manner you dealt with the subject of the future of my command and the knowledge of the decision you had arrived at with regard to it, brought me a lively sense of satisfaction.

When dealing with important matters, such as my interview with yourself, it is my custom, for reference and future guidance, to write down any particular points brought under discussion, and I carried out this in the present case. Since the meeting the scheme, as unfolded by you, dealing with my corps has given me food for thought, the outcome being that I have committed to paper, in the shape of a memo., the salient points which were placed before me at the above-named meeting, also comments on their suitability to my regiment. I have also in this memo. dealt at some length with several important features, all of which at this stage I am anxious should be made clear, and from it I think useful information may be gleaned, and it may prove of assistance in arriving at a wise and just conclusion when dealing finally with my regiment's future.

I am sending you herewith copy of this memo., and I will be glad if you will at least glance over it. I feel that in doing so I am taking an undue liberty, but beg of

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you to excuse this and accept, as my humble apology, the importance of the event and the anxiety which at present possesses me with regard to my command, as well as the hope that the scheme, as promulgated, will give it a useful future. My strong desire is, therefore, before my service comes to an end, to lend a helping hand to inaugurate, hasten, and consummate same, which will be a happy conclusion to a long fight.

I am glad to see that you are to be in Glasgow at the annual gathering of the 1st Lanark Vol. Engineers on the 12th December. I could have wished it had been my corps. At the same time I rejoice at this, as your presence will do good.

May I be allowed to express the hope that the result of your deliberation, with regard to my corps, will be made known prior to its annual gathering on 19th January, 1906, the commencement of a new drill season?

Yours faithfully,
(sgd.) A. B. GRANT.

II

[Copy.]

WAR OFFICE,
25th November, 1905.

DEAR COLONEL GRANT,

It gave me great pleasure to receive your letter of the 23rd inst. and its interesting enclosure.

Let me congratulate you on your excellent memory. I cannot, of course, vouch for the textual accuracy of your summary, but there does not appear to me to be a word in it which does not correctly represent the tenour of our conversation.

I had hoped that on consideration you might feel disposed to take some definite step as the result of our conference. What you have now written greatly simplifies the situation. You may perhaps be aware that since your visit I have had an interview with Colonel Allen, commanding the West York Artillery Volunteers (Sheffield). I spoke to him in the same sense as I did to you. He agreed with you in thinking that the lines suggested by me furnished a reasonable issue from the difficult situation in which we were placed. He subsequently wrote very fully, making proposals for the future organisation of the batteries under his command.

After very full consideration, the Army Council have decided to accept Colonel Allen's proposals with some slight

modifications, and he will be informed through the Commander-in-chief, Northern District, that the corps will be converted into Field Artillery, and armed with the 15-pr. Ehrhardt guns, subject to his agreeing to the conditions laid down. It will be necessary, however, before taking a final step, to obtain the sanction of the Treasury. This I am now seeking. I think, under the circumstances, that I cannot do better than send you an outline of the conditions laid down for the Sheffield corps (they are practically Colonel Allen's own suggestions).

The number of batteries is dependent upon the money available. We undertake to maintain the grant at its present actual figure, and we find that, with the addition of a small sum provided by the corps itself, the funds will support two batteries.

The A.C. would be willing to adopt a similar course with regard to the batteries under your command, provided you agreed to the conditions and the Treasury agreed.

I sincerely trust that we may arrive at this happy, and, as I think, eminently wise issue from our difficulties.

Believe me,

Yours truly,

(sgd.) H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER.

Colonel A. B. Grant, M.V.O., V.D.,
1st Lanarkshire R.G.A. (Vols.).

III

(Enclosure to Colonel Grant, 25/11/05.)

That the strength of the corps be reduced from four 4-gun batteries to two 4-gun batteries.

That the number of men in respect of whom payment may be made from public funds shall not exceed 1 major, 1 captain, 2 subalterns, and 120 men per battery.

That an officer of the Royal Artillery will be appointed adjutant of the batteries.

That the standard of efficiency to be reached by the batteries shall be equal to that attained by the Honourable Artillery Company, subject only to the exception that the 1st Lanarkshire Volunteer Artillery will be required to train as field artillery, and not as horse artillery.

That the whole of the batteries shall train for a period of at least fifteen days in each year.

That the batteries shall fire a minimum number of . . rounds per annum.

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That every officer and Volunteer joining the corps in future shall be enlisted for a period of not less than four years, and shall at all times be efficient and physically fit for active service.

That every member of the corps shall pass an annual medical inspection.

That physical drill will be a branch of the training.

That officers, non-commissioned officers, and drivers will pass riding school.

That stable accommodation and riding-school accommodation shall be guaranteed to the satisfaction of the Army Council.

That every effort shall be made to induce Volunteers now serving, and those enlisting in the future, to join the First-class Army Reserve.

That providing the above conditions be complied with, the annual grant to the corps will be continued at the present rate, viz., a total of £ . . .

That the battery will be supplied with the Ehrhardt 15-pr. Q.F. field gun, with . . . rounds of ammunition per gun per annum.

That facilities will be given for any officer to be attached to the regular batteries during the active drill season.

That a limit of time will be given to enable the batteries to reach the required condition of efficiency, and to reduce their numbers to the new establishment, it being understood that the grant will at no period exceed the figure given above.

It must also be made clear to the Officer Commanding that in training the batteries under his command as field batteries, he has hitherto been acting in contravention of the Regulations, and that the new arrangements are sanctioned by the Army Council on the distinct understanding that the new organisation is of an experimental character only, and that its continuance must entirely depend upon the results obtained.

IV

16, SOUTH FREDERICK STREET, GLASGOW,
27th November, 1905.

DEAR MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER,

I am very pleased to receive your letter, and I write to say that I shall, of course, accept the conditions—these being just those laid down by you and practically agreed to by me in the memo. I sent you.

Meantime, in view of the change in contemplation I shall

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begin to lay my plans to give effect thereto, and I presume that I shall have official notification in due course.

With many thanks for your kind courtesy in connection with this matter, which has put me in good heart for the future of my regiment.

Yours faithfully,
(sgd.) A. B. GRANT.

V

30th November, 1905.

DEAR COLONEL GRANT,

It was a great pleasure to me to receive your letter of the 27th inst., in which you inform me that you are prepared, on behalf of the corps under your command, to accept the proposals which have been put forward by Colonel Allen, commanding the Volunteer Artillery at Sheffield, and which, with some slight modifications, have been accepted by the Army Council. I venture to congratulate you upon the wisdom and public spirit you have displayed in taking this step, which I am confident is in the best interests of the troops under your command.

I have brought your letter before the Army Council, and the question of the future of the Lanarkshire Artillery will now be considered in connection with your proposal.

Believe me,

Yours truly,
(sgd.) H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER.

APPENDIX VI

MILITIA BATTALIONS FOR THE SHORT-SERVICE TERRITORIAL ARMY

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE COLONEL COMMANDING THE
3RD BATTALION — REGIMENT.¹

Letter from Colonel — to the Rt. Hon. H. O. Arnold-Forster,

22nd October, 1905.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I hope you will forgive my writing, but I cannot resist letting you know how delighted I am to see you have now commenced the formation of your Home-Service Regulars in accordance with the scheme you propounded in the House of Commons. I only trust you have not forgotten the part the Militia was to take in that great scheme. I think you said you would require 31 battalions of Militia to complete the number of Home-Service Battalions you were going to create. May I hope that the 3rd Battalion of the — Regiment will form one of them? I think I may take upon myself to say that our officers are unanimously in favour of doing *permanent* work for the defence of their country—and I know of many other regiments equally keen. It would be very unfair on the willing Militia Battalions if they were ignored in the scheme and special Home-Service Regular Battalions formed. The Militia now has its chance of showing the country what it can do as *Regulars*. I do trust this chance will be given it. Give the *Militia itself* a chance of deciding on your scheme, and it will be found practically unanimous in its favour.

Your obedient Servant,

¹ The following letters, which are printed with the permission of the writers, are illustrative of opinions held by some experienced officers of the Militia.

Letter from Mr. Arnold-Forster to Colonel —

24th October, 1905.

DEAR SIR,—

I beg to thank you for your letter of the 22nd, and I am glad to note that you share my views with regard to the future of the Militia. I have never had the slightest doubt that what you say is true, and that if the opportunity were given, the Militia would gladly take their share in furnishing Short-Service Territorial Battalions. I am equally clear that until they do, or rather until some Administration permits them to do so, the Militia will be unable to contend successfully against the disadvantages which the present system entails upon it.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

(sgd.) H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER.

Letter from Colonel — to the Rt. Hon. H. O. Arnold-Forster,

27th October, 1905.

MY DEAR SIR,—

With reference to my last letter, I have been in communication with Colonel —, commanding our battalion. He has been very unwell and cannot travel at present. He, however, writes me as follows:—

“I would be greatly obliged if you would go to the War Office and offer the services of the — Regiment, and I give you full authority to represent me.”

Will you therefore give me an interview at the War Office, so that I can personally, on behalf of our Colonel, offer you the services of the 3rd Battalion — Regiment to form the Home Short-Service Territorial Regiment of the district?

As I have previously stated, if you will give the Militia itself a chance of giving their opinion, you will find they are practically unanimous in wishing to be turned into Home-Service *Regulars*. I have trained with many regiments besides my own, and discussed the question, and find nearly every officer is of my opinion, the very few exceptions being those of men who have business to look after and who should really be serving in the Volunteers.

Your obedient Servant,

APPENDIX VII

ESTIMATE OF THE COST OF CONSCRIPTION

IN the course of the year 1904 the War Office were requested to present to Parliament a statement of the approximate cost of adopting a system of conscription in the United Kingdom. As conscription may take many forms, it was necessary to assume some definite basis for the calculation. The actual assumptions made were as follows. It was assumed—

1. That the number of men raised each year would be 380,000.

2. That officers and non-commissioned officers would be additional to the conscript troops, and would be in the proportion of 30 officers and 70 non-commissioned officers to 900 men.

3. That officers and non-commissioned officers would be paid at Army rates, and conscript privates at 1s. a day only. (A payment is actually made to the conscripts in all foreign armies; the sum is very small, and it is possible British conscripts might be paid less than 1s. But, as will be seen, the item of pay is by no means the most serious figure in the account.)

4. That the Militia and Volunteers would cease to exist.

5. That the Regular Army at home would be reduced by about 30,000 of all ranks, including Reservists. (This is in accordance with a suggestion made by some of the advocates of conscription at the time.)

6. That it would be necessary to double the regimental pay of the Regular Army (except officers). (It seems improbable that large numbers of men would continue to serve in the Regular Army and to serve abroad at the present rate of pay if compulsory home service were in force for the whole community.)

COST OF CONSCRIPTION

On these assumptions the total cost would be as follows:—

| | £ | £ |
|---|------------|------------|
| Cost of Conscript Army of 380,000 men with proportion of Officers and Non-commissioned Officers | 27,530,000 | |
| Cost of doubling regimental pay of Regular Soldiers | 4,414,000 | |
| | | 31,944,000 |
| Deduct—Saving by abolition of Militia and Volunteers | 3,807,000 | |
| Saving by reduction of 30,000 men in Regular Army | 2,237,000 | |
| | | 6,044,000 |
| Net additional cost | | 25,900,000 |

This estimate includes no capital expenditure.

If the number of men to be raised each year were reduced by one-half—*i.e.* from 380,000 to 190,000 men—the cost would be reduced by £13,765,000.

It should be noted that the cost of the pay of the 380,000 conscripts amounts to £6,935,000 only out of the total of £25,900,000; also that no provision is made in the above estimate for proper provision of Artillery and Cavalry, nor is any sum taken for horses or stores, other than personal and barrack equipment, nor for works, other than barrack maintenance, etc.

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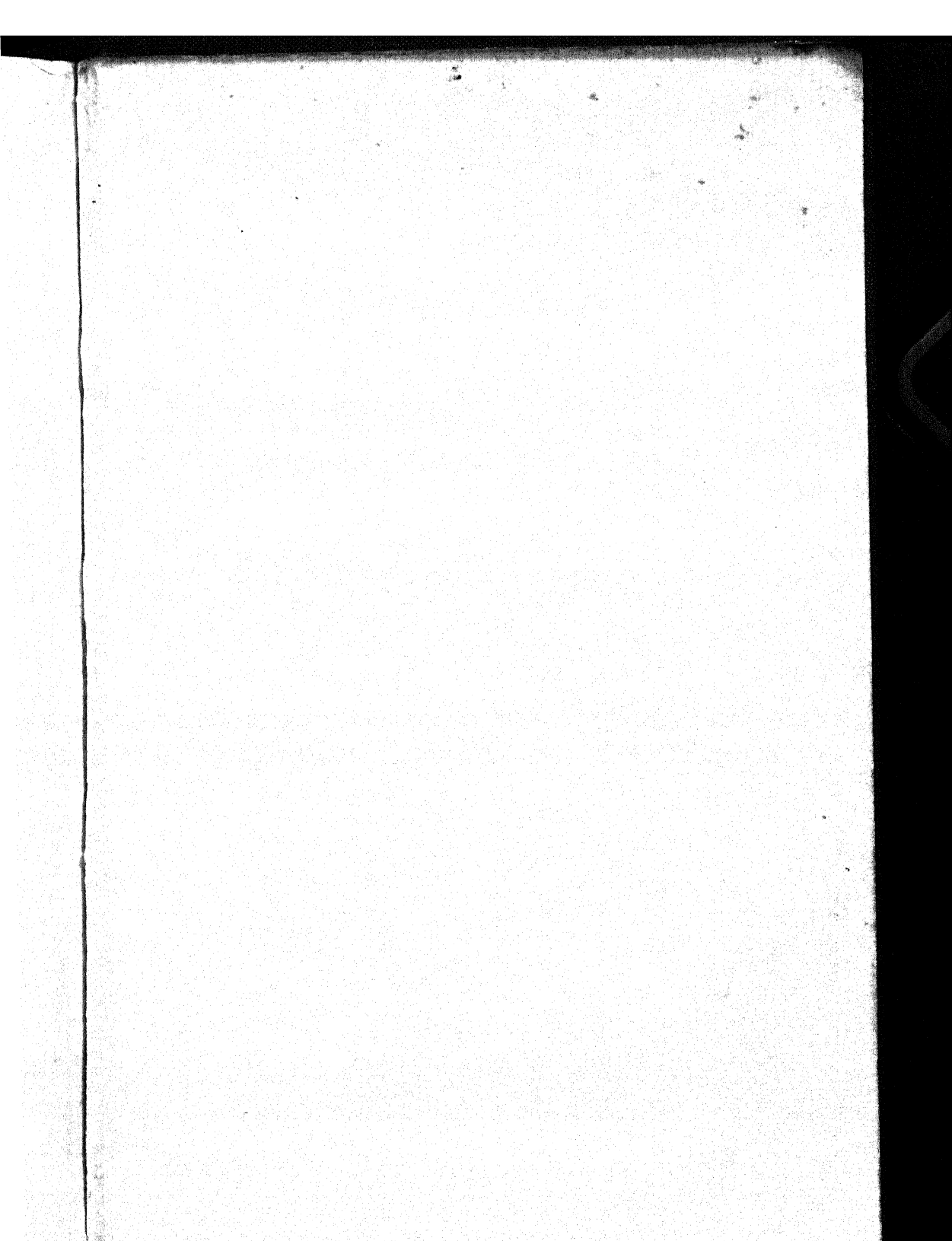
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